THE

Relative Duties

OF

Parents, Husbands, Masters and *Children, Wives, Servants,*

Consider'd in SIXTEEN

SERMONS:

With Three more upon the Case of

SELF-MURTHER.

By *W. FLEETWOOD*, Rector of St. *Augustine's*, *London*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

LONDON,

Printed for Charles Harper, at the *Flower-de-luce*, over against St. *Dunstan's* Church, in *Fleetstreet*.

MDCCV.

To the Inhabitants of the United Parishes of St. Antlin, and St. Faith.

My good Friends,

After fifteen years Experience of your kind acceptance of my Labours within the Hour-glass of God, I have no room to doubt, but some of them will be acceptable to you, in your private Homes. And, of them, I have chosen such as I believed might be of the most profiting, and most edifying Advantage, rather than such as might possibly please some People better, as being very desirous of bearing my Relation, and Affection to you, recommended to your Minds, in the most useful manner, when-ever God should please to part us from each other.

The Depth of Christianity is

To the Inhabitants of the United Pariſhes of St. *Auſtin*, and St. *Faith*.

My good Friends,

AFter fifteen years Experience of your kind acceptance of my Labours with you, in the Houſe of God, I have no cauſe to doubt, but ſome of them will be alſo acceptable to you, at your private Homes. And, of them, I have choſen ſuch as I believed might be of the moſt ſpreading and moſt laſting Advantage, rather than ſuch as might, poſſibly, pleaſe ſome People better; as being very deſirous of having my Relation, and Affection to you, recommended to your Minds, in the moſt uſeful manner, when-ever God ſhould pleaſe to part us from each other.

The Deſign of Chriſtianity is to

make People happy in this *World, as well as in* another; *and the way it takes to do this, is to make them good and virtuous whilſt they live, by the diſcharge of all the Relations they ſtand in to each other, whether Natural, Civil, or Contracted, i. e. by performing their Duty to their Neighbour. And therefore if I can help to make you* good Relations, *you will, I know, be ſo far* good Chriſtians; *but of this you will ſee enough in the following Diſcourſes.*

There is indeed, no want of Printed Sermons, *in the World, abundance of very* learned, *and* uſeful *ones, being daily put out; ſo that I do not pretend to ſupply any* Defect *of this Nature, or to correct the* Miſtakes *of any. But I uſe the liberty I have in common with other Writers, and give you ſome of mine among the reſt. And if I ſay*

I

I believe you will be ſomething readier to read mine, than thoſe of others, you know (as I ſaid above) the Relation I have long had to you, will ſomewhat juſtifie ſuch Expectation, and will a little excuſe me, ſhould I be miſtaken. And there is, moreover, ſomething in Variety *that is very inviting, which may tempt others to read theſe Diſcourſes as well as you, and I am very ſure that whoever reads them, will be no loſer by it, and ſhould be very blameable in putting them out, if I did not think ſo. And that is one great uſe that we may make of Peoples levity, or want of Judgment, in liking or diſliking this or that Mans way of Preaching, that amidſt ſo great variety, they will find* ſomething *to like, and profit by; which if they do, we are to account our Labours well employed, and well paid for. To make*

theſe

these Discourses more useful, there is something Casuistical *in most of them, and such Rules, I hope, laid down, as will enable a Man of tolerable Judgment, and honest Mind, to determine safely, in most cases that ordinarily happen in Humane Life. In the* First Sermon, *I have endeavoured to treat matters in so plain and easie a manner, that, I hope, even very young People will see and understand the reasons of their Duty, in the* rest, *I suppose more Years and Consideration, to make them useful. And, indeed, in all of them, I have had especial regard to* Citizens, *and Men of that Condition, intending them mostly for their Service, whose wants as I thought I best understood, so I was sure I owed them my best Assistance.*

And because I thought that one Discourse would be as much as would be usually read, at any one time, I

have

have taken care, by a ſhort Repetition of its Conſequence, and Connexion with the foregoing one, to make it in ſome ſort compleat by it ſelf, not truſting much to Peoples Memories. When I had made an end of theſe Diſcourſes upon Relative Duties, *the Volume it ſeems, was found too ſmall, for ſome purpoſes of the Book-ſeller, tho' big enough for my own, who only intended to treat of them; and therefore I was prevailed with, to add three more, againſt* Self-murther, *which, I hope, will not be without their uſe, ſince that abhorr'd Practice ſeems to gain ſome ground among us.*

As theſe Sermons, were chiefly intended for your Benefit, ſo I have choſen to direct them to you, that they may both appear, and be, more yours than any ones beſides: And if you ſhall, on your part, account your ſelves, in any meaſure, credit-

ed

ed by ſuch an Application to you; I ſhall, I aſſure you, on my own part, account my ſelf ſufficiently Repaid, by the civility of reading them, with Care and Diligence: There being nothing, but your true and laſting Benefit intended in this Work, by (Gentlemen,)

Your,

Moſt Affectionate Friend,

And Humble Servant,

W. F.

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS.

DUty of *Children* to *Parents*, Sermons I, II, III. from *Page* 1 to 86

Exod. xx. Verſe 12. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

The Caſe of Childrens *Marrying*, againſt the Will, and without Conſent of Parents; *p.* 40

The Caſe of Childrens *going to Law* with Parents, p. 67

Duty of *Parents* to *Children*, Sermon IV. p. 86

Epheſ. iv. Verſe 4. *And ye Fathers*

ceive the reward of the Inheritance, for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.
Duty of *Maſters* to *Servants*, Sermon XVI. p. 393.
Coloſſ. iv. Verſe 1. *Maſters, give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal; knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven.*
The Caſe of *Self-murther*, Sermons XVII, XVIII, XIX. p. 417
2 Sam. xxii. Verſe 23. *And when* Ahithophel *ſaw that his Counſel was not followed, he ſadled his Aſs, and aroſe, and gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order, and hang'd himſelf, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Fathers.*

Diſcourſe I.

Exod. xx. Verſe 12.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

INtending (if it pleaſe God) to treat of the ſeveral Duties we owe to our Neighbour, *i. e.* to one another, in the ſeveral Relations we ſtand in, towards them, it is but fit to begin with that, which is in Nature, Reaſon, and God's Appointment, to be firſt practiſed; and that is, the Duty of Children to their Parents, expreſs'd in the words of the Text, *Honour thy Father*, &c. In diſcourſing upon which words, I will *Firſt* ſhew, what is meant by *honouring* our Parents; and *Secondly*, but conjunctly, ſhew the reaſons of our ſo honouring them; and *Thirdly*, ſee to the Reward here promiſed, *that thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Firſt, What is meant by *Honouring* our Parents. To *Honour* ſignifies a great many things, and takes its ſenſe, eſpecially

Diſ. I. from the Perſon it relates to; to honour *God*, is one thing, to honour the *King* another, to honour our *Superiours* a third, and to honour our *Equals* or *Inferiours*, is a different thing from all the reſt; and therefore the word muſt not be taken in the ſame ſenſe, where-ever we meet it, but the Party to whom it is to be paid, muſt determine its meaning and extent. And therefore ſince it is the intent of this Commandment, to ſecure the Duty of Children to Parents, the ſeveral Duties of them, in their ſeveral Inſtances, are comprehended in the word *Honour*. When therefore we are commanded *to honour our Father and Mother*, we are commanded to *love* them, to *reſpect* them, to *obey* them, and to *ſuccour* and *ſupport* them all we can. *Firſt*, we are commanded to *love* our Parents: But becauſe, properly ſpeaking, it is not in our power (whatever we may think) to love or hate, to hope or fear, when, and what, and whom we will, but according as we apprehend the Thing or Perſon deſirable and lovely, and that upon this account it will depend much upon the Parents management, whether the Children ſhall love with that affection of the Heart, which both the Parents and themſelves deſire they ſhould; therefore by being commanded to *love* our Parents, we

we are eſpecially commanded to take and keep ſuch Courſes, as will moſt probably ſecure and increaſe our natural Affection to our Parents, and to avoid and decline all things that may any ways diminiſh it. To love our Parents, is ſo natural, ſo reaſonable, ſo fit, and ſo expected, that few have the confidence to own the want of it, even when they know, and grieve perhaps, they have it not; and the want of this Affection being oftentimes the occaſion of our denying them that Reſpect, Obedience, and Support, we certainly owe, and ought unqueſtionably to pay to them, it is to be improv'd and nouriſh'd by all the Conſiderations we can raiſe. How far the Conſideration of their being under God, the Authors and Originals of our Life and Being, will contribute to the exciting this Affection, is not eaſie to determine. The Ancients thought it would go a great way, and therefore inſiſted much upon it. They ſeem to have been very fond of *Being*, as if it were of it ſelf a great Bleſſing; whereas if we conſider it throughly, it is, of it ſelf no farther good, than as it makes us capable of *receiving* good; for if we are in miſery, our *Being* is then far from good, occaſioning us juſt ſo much evil as we ſuffer; and all that while, our Being is being miſerable. Dif. I.

Dif. I. If God himſelf ſhould create us, with deſign of being miſerable, we could not *thank* him, much leſs *love* him, for giving us ſuch Being; Nay, ſhould he make us to be miſerable after this life, and leave us to be as happy as we could, whilſt we liv'd here; yet we could neither truly love nor thank him, for creating us. The very certainty of being at any time miſerable by his appointment, muſt make him dreadfully odious to our minds, and therefore when we thank God (as we daily do) for our *Creation*, it is upon this account, that he has made us capable of being happy both here, and hereafter; that he has given us all the good Things of this World, *i. e.* Capacities and Powers of getting and enjoying them, and of attaining everlaſting happineſs in the Life to come. It is always for ſomething *good*, paſt, preſent, or promiſed for the future, that we thank God; and that is the ſole foundation of all love, it terminates all upon our ſelves, and our own good; and where we neither have, nor do experience that, nor have any good in hope or proſpect, it is impoſſible to love; and therefore the love that Children owe their Parents, upon the account of receiving their Life and Being at their Hands, is only ſo far due, as the *Being* they give makes them capable of receiving and enjoying *other* good. It

It is true, that the very having given Life and Being to their Children, without any other conſideration, excites or creates a new and ſingular affection to them, properly *Parental*; becauſe we find the like in other Creatures, that are incapable of any Conſiderations; but yet, I queſtion not but this Parental, Natural, and Irreſiſtible Affection, is greatly heightned and improv'd in Reaſonable Creatures, by the hopes of deriving ſome Comfort, Credit, or Advantage from their Children: So that although the Parental Love be the moſt diſintereſted of all Loves, yet is it truly ſelfiſh at the bottom, propoſing to it ſelf Pleaſure and Satisfaction, Honour and Credit, ſome advantage or other from the objects of its love. But notwithſtanding this, the ſingular and inexpreſſible affection of Parents to their Children, deſerves to be repaid with all the love they can, becauſe the Parental Love is hourly diſplaying and exerting it ſelf, in all the beneficial acts of kindneſs it can think upon: It ſupplies all the wants of helpleſs Infancy, ſecures from all the hazards of heedleſs Childhood, and giddy and unthinking Youth; it ſhapes the Body, preſerves it ſtrait and upright, and keeps the ſeveral Limbs in order, and fits them for their natural Operations, and makes the Perſon beautiful and come-

Dif. I.

Diſ. I. ly and to do this, it bears with many Troubles, and incommodious Hardſhips; and tho' theſe matters appear but ſlight, and are but ſeldom thought upon, yet the defects and miſeries that befal, where any of this care is ſlackened, or this love abated, are not ſmall or inconſiderable, they have ſome of them, an influence on us, all our Lives.

But moreover, it is this Affection that informs the Mind, and regulates the Manners, that trains up the Reaſon, exerciſes the Memory, and inſtructs them to argue, and underſtand their little Affairs, and takes care to educate, and fit them for greater Matters: It is this, that brings them firſt to God in Baptiſm, and that keeps them after in the ways of Goodneſs and Religion, by inſtilling into them wiſe and virtuous Principles, by remembring them conſtantly of their ſeveral Duties, by encouraging them in good, with Kindneſs, Favours, and Rewards, and by reproving, threatning, and correcting them when evil, or tending thereto.

Theſe, and a thouſand other, are the ways that Parents take to make their Children happy; beſides thoſe endleſs and innumerable Labours, Watchings, and Sollicitudes, that conſume their whole Life, to make them happy with the Riches

Riches and good Things of this World; Diſ. I.
ſo that whatever benefits can be the ground and foundation of Love in Children, the Care and Love of Parents abundantly affords them. And though the Parents are oblig'd by Natural Inſtinct and Affection, *i. e.* by Principles of Love and Tenderneſs implanted in their Hearts by God, to do theſe things, and take this care of Children, and though they find their Pleaſure and account in ſo doing (for God who made this Love and this Proviſion neceſſary, hath alſo, in his goodneſs, made it eaſie and delightful to the Parent) yet is the Children's Love nevertheleſs due, in return for the Parental one; becauſe that love is founded upon Benefits receiv'd, or hoped for; and whatever might move the Parents, yet it is certain they deſign'd the Benefits, and the Children find and feel them: And therefore are obliged to take the remembrance of them into conſideration, to excite and ſtir them up to love their Parents, who have done ſo great things for them, and who were not only the Authors of their Being, but alſo, under God, of their Welfare and their preſent Happineſs. And though the Parents deſigns and endeavours after Happineſs, ſhould not ſucceed according to their Wiſhes, as very often they will not, yet

Diſ. I. ſince there is no want of love and care in them, the obligation on the Child is ſtill the ſame.

And I chuſe to make the ſenſe of Benefits receiv'd, or at leaſt intended, and the hope of Benefits to come, the bottom and foundation of the Filial Love, not only becauſe it is unqueſtionably ſo in truth, and the foundation of all other Love, and the true cement of all Relations, and that which truly obliges to the performance of all Duties, and makes them to become Duties, antecedently to all Commands, whether of God or Man; but alſo for the Parents ſake, that they knowing on what it is, that love is truly bottom'd, and expecting, deſiring, and approving nothing more than the love of their Children, may take the greater care to raiſe and ſecure this love, by laying ſuch foundation for it, that it cannot eaſily miſcarry; for this will ſhew them, that although the fondneſs and the blandiſhments of Parents, will pleaſe and gain the love of their Children, whilſt they continue childiſh, wanton, and unthinking; yet when they put away childiſh things, they will want ſome other foundation for them to build their affection on: The love that was built upon their Play-things will vaniſh, when thoſe are thrown away, and broken:

broken; And the love that ſhould ſucceed, Diſ. I.
will want another bottom; and that muſt be, a Wiſe, a Virtuous, and Religious Education, and ſuch a reaſonable and decent proviſion of things temporal, that the older the Children grow, the longer they live, the more they advance in Reaſon and Underſtanding, the better they ſhall love their Parents, the greater reaſon, the juſter cauſe they ſhall ſee for their ſo doing; they ſhall ſenſibly feel the advantageous effects of their Parents care. And therefore upon this account it is oft-times much in the Parents Power to ſecure the Children's love, by the obligations they may lay upon them; and let all People, when they find occaſion to awaken and excite this affection to their Parents within them, call to mind the many *Benefits* they have received at their Hands, as well as *Being*.

A *Second* Duty Children owe their Parents, is *Reſpect*; that is, all external Honour and Civility, as love comprizes all internal Honour and Eſteem; all their Behaviour is to be ſubmiſſive, dutiful and mannerly and ſuch as becomes Inferiors towards their Betters. It is an offence againſt natural decency, to ſee the Children bear themſelves upon the ſquare with their Parents, to anſwer them rudely or ſlightly, or to be wanting in Reſpect towards them, whe-

Diſ. 1. whether in Looks or Geſture, in unbeſeeming Words or Actions. And when Parents, through their fondneſs or want of judgment, are content to take off the reſtraint, to remove the uſual bars that kept their Children at due diſtance, and to admit them to equality, it is great odds but they repent it quickly; few young ones know how to uſe their liberty, before their time; and beſides, it makes the task of inſtructing and managing them much more difficult; for when the awe and check is taken off, (as it is by too much condeſcention and familiarity) your Counſels make but faint impreſſions, and your Commands are conſtantly diſputed. When Parents looſe theſe bands of Diſtance and Reſpect, if there be no miſcarriage on it, it is not owing to their Diſcretion, but to the modeſty and goodneſs of the Children's Diſpoſition. But I am ſpeaking now of the Children's Behaviour, where the Parent has not made way for diſreſpect, by any undue relaxation of diſcipline; it is to be full of kindneſs and good nature, good manners and civility. They are oblig'd to ſay things honourable of them, to pry as little into their infirmities and failings as they can themſelves, and to extenuate and conceal them as much from others. And for this, there is ſo much

much reaſon and decency in Nature, that it chocques us unavoidably, to hear one reproach his Parents with either Vices or Infirmities, tho' what he ſays is true, unleſs it be done with great concern and tenderneſs, with grief and pity, and that to ſuch as will make no ſcorn or mockage of them; but when they do it with contempt or pleaſure in the telling, we cannot help abhorring ſuch Impiety: the Hearts of all Men go along with *Noah*, in laying puniſhment on *Cham* for his unnatural and profane Deriſion; and love the memory of thoſe Sons, that would not ſee themſelves, nor ſuffer others to be witneſſes of, the miſcarriage of their Father. Diſ. I.

There is, in a word, no worſer token or prognoſtick of a bad diſpoſition in Children, than to ſee them wanting in Reverence to their Parents, in any kind: 'Tis probable they will never make good Citizens and Subjects to the Commonwealth, or good Relations of any ſort, failing in thoſe reſpects which are moſt due, and paid with greateſt eaſe, and accepted the moſt kindly.

And that Children may diſcharge this part of their Duty better, as it is partly in the Parents power, ſo ſhould it be their care and concern. They muſt be careful how they live, and behave themſelves in

Diſ. I. in ſight of their Children, and what examples they ſet them; for if they make themſelves vile and cheap in their Children's Eyes, by too much familiarity, by light and indiſcreet carriage, either towards them, or others in their ſight, they will in vain expect that Reverence and Reſpect that is due to their Relation. The foundation of *Reſpect* is ſome ſuppoſed excellence and worth, and in this caſe, ſome kind of Superiority; and when Parents admit their Children to an equality, and make them conſcious to their Indiſcretions, Follies, and Miſcarriages, they do but invite Contempt, taking away the very foundation and ſupport of all Reſpect and Honour. The Children ſhould not, if it could be hindred, be ſo much as witneſſes of any thing indecently ſaid or done by Parents: All the domeſtick differences, the idle and unſeemly quarrels and debates, the ſimple and unkind words and actions, that much too commonly paſs betwixt the Parents, ſhould be concealed and hidden from Children: For they obſerve and treaſure up theſe evil follies, and, ſecretly at leaſt, ſide with the one, and learn to hate or to deſpiſe the other, or entertain too ſoon, a mean opinion of them both; which undermines all manner of eſteem and dutiful obſervance.

Nay,

Nay, and ſometimes it comes to paſs, Diſ. I.
that one Parent will moſt unadviſedly and ungodlily, ſupport the Children in contempt and diſreſpect to the other; and to vex and wreak their Anger on each other, will make their Children miſerable by Diſobedience. This is a fearful caſe, and a thing they ought at no hand to do; for neither Parent has Authority to abſolve the Children of their Duty to the other. And though one of them ſhould be of evil fame, and bad example, yet is *Reſpect*, and all exterior Honour to be paid them, even when they can be neither lov'd, obey'd, or imitated by the Children: For this part of Honouring the Parents is always in the Childrens power, and always to be done; and therefore tho' the caſe may ſometimes be ſo hard, as that the Children ſhall not be able to pay Obedience to the ſeveral, and ſometimes oppoſite Commands of their Parents, yet it can never happen ſo that they ſhall not always be able to pay Reſpect and Honour to them both, and therefore of this, they muſt never fail, for the doing this can never be an injury to either Parent.

And if one Parent ſhould be ſo unreaſonable as to require the Child to affront or diſreſpect the other, the Child would be ſafe in a reſpectful Diſobedience, and

Re-

Diſ. I. Refuſal, becauſe no Parent has a right of taking away anothers right, and each of them have equal right to the Reſpect and Honour of their Children, and therefore the Honour and Reſpect that one requires at the Children's Hands, is of equal force to pay it to the other. It muſt indeed be paid to both, by all Children; and 'tis a moſt unkind and wicked thing, for any Parent to command, require, encourage, or be pleas'd with any rude, ill-natur'd and undutiful Behaviour of the Children to either of the Parents, upon any provocation or account whatever. Children are the Pledges of mutual Love, and the cement of Affection; the uſe of them is, naturally to make up Differences; and 'tis ſad when they become occaſions, or wideners of a Breach.

But after all, there can be no ſuch univerſally obliging Rules of Honour and Reſpect, as that all People ſhould alike obſerve them: The common Uſages and Cuſtoms of the Country are like to be the beſt Standard and Meaſure of Reſpect and Honour: And there ſeems to be a Reſpect peculiar to ſome Qualities and Conditions, that were not proper to be us'd by others; only this I think may be obſerv'd, that the meaner People are, the leſs they look after and require this dutiful Reſpect at their Chil-

Children's Hands, and they commonly fare the worſe for it, there being abundantly more Inſtances of Rudeneſs, Stubbornneſs, Ill-nature, Diſobedience, and Rebellious carriage among the Children of ordinary and mean People, than thoſe of better Quality and Condition; which ſhould not be, for the pooreſt Parents have right to Honour and Reſpect from their Children, as well as the Rich and High; and they both might and would have it, if they would look after it in due time, and require it of them; and it would be a great advantage both to themſelves and Children, to bring them up, though never ſo mean, in a reſpectful awe, and dutiful regard to their Parents; they would find their account in ſo doing, and reap more comfort from their Children than they commonly do. Diſ. I.

And what I ſaid of keeping Children at a Diſtance, is alſo to be underſtood with Caution and Diſcretion; it does moſt commonly and naturally preſerve Reſpect and Honour, and therefore it is generally beſt to be obſerv'd: But the different circumſtances of Parents, and the different tempers and diſpoſitions of Children may make great alteration, and therefore are to come into conſideration. Some Children and young People are of ſo modeſt

Diſ. I. a temper, and ſo diſcreetly educated and behaved, that all the Liberty you give them, does them no harm, they ſtill preſerve a lively Senſe of Reſpect, and never go beyond their bounds, but demean themſelves decently in the midſt of Favour and Indulgence. Theſe would be hurt by great reſtraint and awe, and the Parent would loſe a great deal of comfort and innocent delight, by keeping ſuch at too much diſtance. Others grow wanton, inſolent and head-ſtrong upon the leaſt indulgence, and know not how to behave themſelves under liberty and kindneſs, and fall from their reſpect immediately, neither knowing themſelves nor others; this is the general tendency, this is the humour of moſt, and Liberty is hurtful to them; Reſtraint and Awe is beſt for theſe, and without them they are miſerable.

The difference of *Age* is alſo to be conſidered as well as Temper, in the matter of diſtance. It would be weakneſs to expect the ſame Regard from the Elder as from the Younger, the Elder muſt no more be wanting in Reſpect than the Younger, but they are each to conſider what is proper and becoming them to pay, and ſo is the Parent too. No Age, no Quality, no Change of Condition, tho' never ſo much for the better, can ex-

exempt the Children from paying Honour and Reſpect to their Parents, but they will each of them make ſome change and alteration of the expreſſion of that reſpect. This Honour and Reſpect of Children to their Parents, is not only handſom and becoming, but exceedingly uſeful to many good purpoſes in publick Government, and therefore all States and Kingdoms have taken care to ſecure them; and therefore I have choſen, not only to ſhew the Children the reaſonableneſs, the decence and neceſſity of it, and the obligations they lie under from Gods Command, but to excite the Parents alſo, to endeavour what they can, to preſerve and keep it up in their Children, having ſuch Power, and ſo many advantageous opportunities of doing it, which they muſt not omit, both for their own, and for their Children's ſakes: It would be better if they would try to *puniſh*, rather than *grieve* for the ſlight or diſreſpects ſhewed by their Children; they would certainly grieve the leſs and ſeldomer. Diſ. I.

And this would alſo make way for the readier and better *Obedience* to their Commands, which is the *third* and principal thing to be conſidered, and certainly concluded under this Commandment, of Honouring our Parents.

Diſ. I. And indeed without *Obedience*, Reſpect and Honour would be meer formality, and mockage. There is all the reaſon in the World, that whilſt Children want underſtanding to direct their Choice and Will, they ſhould have no other will but that of their Parents, and therefore ſhould obey whilſt they do not underſtand. Even Children themſelves ſee this, as ſoon as they come to reaſon in the leaſt degree, they ſee, that if they had been left to themſelves, they had in many caſes come to miſchief, and therefore ſee how fit it was they ſhould obey their Parents Orders and Commands; and People ſomewhat older, ſee as much neceſſity that *they* ſhould do ſo too, and they themſelves will ſee as much, when they have once outgrown their Childiſh fancies. They will ſee that their Parents Wiſdom and Experience and Capacity, was much greater than their own, and therefore fitter to rule and guide. I believe there are few People in the World, that have, whilſt young, diſputed and repin'd at the Commands of their Parents, who have not afterwards chang'd their minds, and found they were truly wiſer, better, and more reaſonable to be complied withal than their own Wills and Humours; altho' for the preſent they thought otherwiſe. It is moſt likely that having liv'd longer,

ſtood

ſtood higher, and obſerv'd things better, they ſhould be moſt in the right, and give the beſt Advice; the Parents muſt needs diſcern what is moſt fit and proper for their Children; and therefore though they may be now and then miſtaken, yet it is always ſafeſt to follow their Inſtructions and Commands; when Children obey their Parents, though they afterwards happen to miſcarry, yet they have this to comfort themſelves withal, that they miſcarried in their Duty and Obedience, that they took the ſafeſt and wiſeſt courſe, and ſuch as all good People approve; and every one is much more ready to pity and help ſuch, under their Misfortunes, than ſuch as fell into the like, through Stubbornneſs, and Self-conceit, and Diſobedience. There is therefore all the preſumption in the World upon the Parents ſide, that their Advice and Commands are the wiſeſt and moſt reaſonable. And next, there is all the certainty of the good intention and deſign that can be; who ſhould intend the benefit of Children ſo much as the Parent? Why, they ſeem to live for no other end and purpoſe, than to do them good; they have no other aim than their Advantage, all their care and ſtudy, all their thoughts are fixt upon them; they ſuffer a thouſand inconveniencies for Dif. I.

Dif. I. their ſake, and chooſe to live ſometimes penuriouſly and hardly, that their Children may live at eaſe and pleaſure, and who ſhould ſuſpect the Counſels and Commands of ſuch, of want of love and kindneſs? And there is nothing more proper to perſuade, than an opinion that they do it out of love, and deſign our good thereby. Now no one can poſſibly be ſo aſſur'd of the kindneſs and good-will of any one beſides, as of his Parents, and therefore the Commands of no one ought to be entertain'd with a better opinion of them, and this would help to forward our Obedience to them. It would be well, if the young ones would (as they are capable) conſider a little with themſelves. Theſe Counſels and Commands come from People that have liv'd a great deal longer in the World than I, have made Remarks, and had Experience, they have had Parents themſelves, and either followed their advice, or repented of not doing it; it is true, the Duties enjoyn'd me are unacceptable to me, they are ſuch as I ſhould not chooſe, and ſuch as I do not like; but I have often found my ſelf miſtaken; and I have now no reaſon to think my ſelf wiſer, than they, who perſuade me otherwiſe than I am inclin'd; I am but of Yeſterday, and know little, I have no Experience; and ſure theſe Parents have not liv'd

liv'd ſo long for nothing; Old Age has ſomething in it good, moſt certainly; Wiſdom, Knowledge, and Experience, commonly attend it, and make them fit for Counſellors: There is all the Preſumption of Wiſdom on their ſide that can be. And then, for their Affection and Good-Will, I have equal reaſon to conclude on them alſo; there is no body ſo like to wiſh me well as they; there is no body has done ſo much for me, no body grieves at my Miſcarriages like them, or ſtudies and endeavours to prevent them, with that Concern and Care: Other People, as it comes in their way, give me good Counſel, and ſay the ſame Things, in effect, that Parents do; they warn me of the ſame Dangers, and exhort me to the ſame Duties; but I can plainly perceive there is a great deal of difference betwixt the Mind and Concern with which our Parents ſpeak, and thoſe of other People, tho' good Friends. They ſpeak with a lively Senſe and Feeling, with Force and Affection, in great earneſt, and from the bottom of the Heart: As if they were to endure the Evils, they warn us to avoid; and ſhare with us, the Miſeries we ſhall undergoe, if we follow not their Counſels; ſo that they ſeem to be exceedingly intereſted in our behalf; Diſ. I.

Diſ. I. and yet 'tis evident, they can make no manner of Advantage of our complying with them, they can get nothing by us, but Content and Satisfaction; all they have already is ours in Deſign, and all they are getting ſtill, and intend or deſire to get, is for us. So that we can ſuſpect them of no Deſign upon us; and all theſe things ſhew us moſt evidently, that what they ſay to us, the Commands they lay upon us, proceed from the trueſt, moſt ſincere, diſintereſted Affection in the World. They are afflicted and undone when we miſcarry; let *them* be never ſo wiſe, or rich, or honourable, *our* Folly, Sin, and Diſobedience, will make them miſerable; altho' they loſe thereby neither their Underſtanding, Wealth, nor Places, yet ſuch is their Concern for us, that in all theſe Things they are not happy, unleſs we will conſent to make them ſo, by being dutiful and obedient, and taking good and virtuous Courſes; and on the other ſide, let us be never ſo wiſe, or rich, or honourable, all that our Parents get by it, is Pleaſure and Content, for which (inſtead of taking ought away) they lift up their Hands and Hearts to God, and bleſs us. And can I think the Counſels and Commands of ſuch People, are not the beſt that they could think on, the

the moſt kindly intended, and fitteſt for my Practice and Compliance? Diſ. I.

None of theſe Conſiderations are above the Capacity and Underſtanding of Young People, when they come to be capable of receiving and obeying Commands; there is nothing ſo plain and eaſy as to conſider, that Parents love their Children dearly, and without deſign, and are older, wiſer, and more experienc'd than themſelves, and therefore the fitteſt to command, and fitteſt to be obeyed. And tho' the Commands of the Parents do often croſs the Children's Deſires, and hinder them from perſuing their Pleaſures, yet it is not becauſe the Parents envy them their Pleaſures, or deny them Satisfaction, to ſhew their Power and Authority; but becauſe the Proſecution of their Deſires, in theſe forbidden Inſtances, is criminal, and would be hurtful to them, altho' perhaps they ſee it not; they never command them to do any thing, but the doing it tends to the Children's Advantage; nor ever forbid them any thing, but what is hurtful in it ſelf or Conſequences; and therefore tho' the Children ſee nothing but Pleaſure in what they propoſe, yet the Parent ſtands higher, and ſees there is alſo Sin, or Danger near it, and ſees how it will operate, at diſtance, and what

Diſ. I. Fruits it will produce. And as they remember their Parents to have hinder'd them when they were younger, from eating ſeveral Meats, or drinking ſeveral Drinks, and doing ſeveral things, which they then lik'd, and deſir'd to have, and do, and griev'd and repin'd at their refuſal, which yet they are now ſatisfied, proceeded from no Unkindneſs, but turn'd, as it was intended, to their Benefit; ſo might they learn to conclude, that the commanding them Things, for the preſent uneaſy, and forbidding them Things, for the preſent ſweet and deſirable, may be full as reaſonable, and fit to be complied withal; and that when a little time is over-paſt, and the Seaſon of Pleaſure ſomewhat ſpent, they will be equally ſatisfied with the Care and Wiſdom of their Parents. And this, Young People would do well to improve; they are capable of conſidering, and they ought to do it. Let them inquire of all the Neighbourhood, of all their Acquaintance that are grown up, and older than themſelves (and the older ſtill the better;) let them enquire of all, or any of theſe, and ſee how many there are that will tell them, It is better, ſafer, and wiſer, to follow their own humours, than the advice of their Parents; and how many, upon Experi-

Experience, have ſucceeded in diſobeying their Commands; how many there are who are not griev'd at their Diſobedience, and do not wiſh moſt earneſtly they had complyed with what was advis'd, or requir'd of them: And when they find that all the World agree, that notwithſtanding the preſent deſires, and the uneaſineſs of complying with the Commands of Parents, yet it is better ſo to do; that they who have obeyed, are very much ſatisfied; and they who have not are griev'd and troubled, and wiſh they had; they will ſee they ought to conclude, that however unacceptable ſome Commands of Parents may for the preſent be, yet it is better to yield to them, than to indulge to their own humours; and that the United Wiſdom and Experience of the whole World is a ſafer bottom to proceed upon, than any preſent longing. Diſ. I.

Theſe are ſome of the Grounds and Principles upon which the obligation of Children to comply with and obey their Parents Commands, is built and depends: there are alſo others, but I rather choſe to mention, and inſiſt on, theſe, becauſe they are ſuch as young People themſelves, who are principally concern'd, may ſee the Reaſon of, and have Capacity

Diſ. I. pacity and Parts to conſider, that their Obedience may not be altogether blind and implicite; and becauſe it is as probable, as any thing beſides, that they are the Reaſons, at the bottom, of God's Command, that Children ſhould obey their Parents: And are alſo the Reaſons why theſe Children ſhould themſelves, when in time they come to be Parents, exact and require, and find obedience at their Childrens Hands. This every one expects, this all are naturally led to: Where is the Parent that does not think it reaſonable his Children ſhould obey him, even againſt their inclinations? And ſhould not prefer *his* Wiſdom, and Experience to their own Will, or Underſtanding? And truſt to *his* Affection, Love and Favour, rather than perſue their own humours? And upon the ſame account and grounds that any one expects Obedience from his Children, he knows he ought to pay it to his Parents. Now Children and Young People obſerving (as they eaſily may) that Parents univerſally exact Obedience at their Childrens Hands, may very well conclude, that they ſhall do ſo too, whenever they come to be Parents; and may conclude that there muſt certainly be good Reaſon in a Practice that all

the

the different Nations of the World agree and center in. And if they can imagine that all the World could not agree in any thing that was not reaſonable and juſt, and yet agree in requiring Children to obey their Parents, they will quickly ſee that it is reaſonable and juſt for Children to obey their Parents; for the Parents could not reaſonably require it, if it were not reaſonable that the Children ſhould give it. Diſ. I.

But leaſt theſe Reaſons ſhould not prevail, God makes it a Command, and bids us *Honour our Father and Mother:* So that he who is diſobedient now, offends againſt *Command* as well as *Reaſon*; againſt *God*, as well as *Man*; and to ſhew us, how fit it is, to comply with and obey our Parents, God calls himſelf throughout the Holy Scriptures our *Father*, and from that Title and Relation calls for our obedience. And therefore ſtubborn, head-ſtrong, diſobedient and rebellious Children, ought to think upon theſe things; to conſider all the ties and obligations that they have, to be obedient to their Parents; the reaſonableneſs, the pleaſure, and ſecurity of being ſo; the approbation of all good People, and the Bleſſing of God that goes along with it; and on the other hand, the grief and trouble of mind, the ſorrow

Diſ. I. row and repentance, at home; the ſhame and infamy from abroad, and the diſpleaſure of Almighty God, that attend and follow diſobedience to their Parents. They ought, I ſay, to think upon theſe things, and whatever elſe may forward them in the performance of their Duty. But becauſe there are a great many Caſes, in which the Children plead exemption from this Rule; and in which they do not actually obey their Parents Commands, and yet defend themſelves as no Tranſgreſſors of this Law; it may be of ſome uſe, to ſee in what particulars they are oblig'd to obey without reſerve, and in what they are at liberty; that the Duty of Children, and the juſt Authority of Parents may be both of them ſecur'd.——But of theſe things in the following Diſcourſes.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe II.

Exod. xx. Verſe 12.

Duty of Children to Parents.

HAving ſhewn, that under *Honouring Father and Mother* is comprehended Loving, Reſpecting, Obeying, and Relieving them under any Neceſſity, I had only time to ſpeak to the motives and obligations, Children have to pay their Parents, Love, Reſpect and Obedience; and to excite the Parents to ſecure theſe ſeveral parts of Duty from the Children to themſelves, by all the ways and methods they could think on, as well for their Childrens ſake, as for their own comfort, I am now, before I leave this Head, to conſider ſome of the Caſes, in which, the Children plead exemption from this Command; and to lay down ſuch Rules as may, moſt probably, ſecure the Duty of Children, and the juſt Authority of Parents.

And, *Firſt*, it is certain that all Commands of God, muſt be obeyed, before thoſe of Parents; if ever they interfere, our

Diſ. II. our Duty to God is moſt undoubtedly to be preferr'd. The Counſels or Commands of Parents muſt never ſway ſo far with Children, as to cauſe them to do, what God forbids, or to neglect to do what God Commands; becauſe the Authority of God is firſt, and greateſt; nothing is to ſtand in Competition with it; but then the Command of God muſt be plain and evident; it muſt not be a doubtful and diſputed thing; but full as certain, as that obedience is due to the Commands of Parents. *Walk ye not in the Statutes of your Fathers, neither obſerve their Judgments, nor defile your ſelves with their Idols; I am the Lord your God, walk in my Statutes, and keep my Judgments, and do them.* Saith God to his People, *Ezek.* 20. 18. in wicked and forbidden inſtances, we are not to be led by their Example, Counſels, or Commands; but then muſt *hate our Father, and our Mother, and follow Chriſt*, i. e. prefer our Duty and Obedience to God, to all other Conſiderations. Thus if Parents ſhould be ſo wickedly inclin'd, as to command their Children to Lye, to Steal, to do Violence, and Injuſtice, the Children muſt refuſe, but with reſpect: they are not at liberty to obey, they have an antece-

dent

dent obligation, they are tied, by God, to truth, and honeſty, and juſtice. *Children obey your Parents, in all things, for this is well pleaſing unto the Lord*, ſaith St. *Paul*, Coloſ. 3. 20. but then it is explain'd in *Epheſ.* 6. 1. *Children obey your Parents, in the Lord, for this is right*, i. e. according to God's Command and Will, for to obey them *againſt* God, can neither be right nor pleaſing, and ſo we ſhould have underſtood him had he not explain'd himſelf, and ſo we muſt underſtand him in all other places. But of this, there is not much diſpute, People do generally agree, that God is to be obeyed rather than Man. Diſ II.

But tho' Children are at liberty to diſobey unjuſt Commands, yet are they not always at liberty to do or undertake, even things that are truly Good and Religious, without the conſent, or againſt the Commands of their Parents; that is, where the thing to be done or undertaken, is not as certainly commanded by God, as it is commanded to obey our Parents, we are there rather to obey our Parents, commanding us not to do ſuch thing, than to do it, tho' it be truly good in it ſelf; and ſuch obedience to Parents, would not be *obeying Man rather than God*, becauſe ſuch

Dif. II. ſuch thing is not expreſly commanded them by God. The Caſe is common in the World abroad, tho' it concerns *us* but little. To retire from the buſineſs and temptations of the World, into a Cloyſter, there to devote the whole of their lives to Prayer and Meditation, and the more immediate Service of God, is certainly (with them) exceeding laudable, and religious, and to avoid temptations by Prayer and Meditation is certainly commanded by God; but yet this is not lawful for Children to undertake, without conſent, or againſt the Commands of their Parents, and the pretences that are made for ſuch a diſobedience, are not ſtrong enough to bear it out. They ſay, that *to ſerve God no Man need to ask leave*; that's very true in the general, but as to the particular manner of ſerving him, there may be great need of asking leave, becauſe it may concern another; it may be to the Parents prejudice to be defrauded of the Childrens Service, or otherways hurtful to him.

They ſay, that *if the Father be Superiour, yet God is the Supreme; and hath more right to the Children than the Parents have:* This is alſo true, but this Supream hath bounded his right by Commands,

Commands, which are firſt to be obſerv'd, and after that the Parents. God hath a right to be obeyed, and this no Duty to Parents can diſpence withal; but then this right is only to be known by his Commands; the Children cannot ſay, this is a good thing that I am about to undertake, and therefore God hath a right to my Performance of it, unleſs it be commanded; for many things are good that are not commanded expreſly to all People, but only to be done in time and place convenient, and by fit and proper Perſons. And when Children withſtand the Commands of their Parents, upon pretence of pleaſing God, they forget that God is beſt pleas'd with Obedience, and that they neglect to *obey* God, commanding them to obey their Parents, whilſt they think to *pleaſe* him in doing a thing that he has left them at liberty to do or not, and that their Parents would not have them do. Diſ. II.

They ſay moreover, *that tho' the Parents have a right over the Bodies of their Children, yet that they are to have the diſpoſal of their Souls, as being the moſt intereſted and concern'd in them*, and this is alſo certainly true; but obeying

Diſ. II. the Parents Commands will not hurt the Childrens Souls; their Souls may certainly be ſafe without their entring into a Religious Houſe, and devoting their whole lives to Prayer and Meditation: To ſerve God and be very devout, to pray much and meditate often, are very competible and conſiſtent with ſtaying in the World, and obeying the Commands of Parents: But to diſobey, and grieve, and it may be injure the Parents, by ſuch Retirement, are not conſiſtent with Religion and our Duty to either God or our Parents. So that to do well and wiſely, we muſt obey our Parents Commands, of which we are certain, rather than certainly diſobey them, in hopes of pleaſing God, by perſuing our own inclinations, of which there is no neceſſity. The Children are indeed to diſpoſe of their own Souls, and all the reaſon in the World they ſhould, becauſe they are only concern'd in them, and ſhall be anſwerable for them; and therefore if Parents command their Children to be wicked and ungodly, or to do any thing that might deſtroy or hurt their Souls, they were not to be obeyed, or hearkened to; if they ſhould command to renounce to Chriſti-

Chriſtianity, or to deſpiſe Morality, it were nothing, they have no right to obedience, but when the caſe is only of ſome particular Mode or Manner of ſerving God, the Soul is ſecure as well in one as the other, and the pretence of greater ſanctity, and the more advantageous opportunity of living holily, is not a cauſe ſufficient for a Child to withdraw himſelf from his Fathers Power, to which he is juſtly ſubjected, and is not Maſter of himſelf, to give himſelf up to other Government, where his Parents ſhall have no more to do with him; and if it be true that the Childrens Bodies are under the government and diſpoſal of Parents, it will be unjuſt to deprive them of that Power, under pretence of taking care of the Soul, which may alſo be ſecur'd the other way. The Antient Chriſtians were very tender of the Childrens Duty to their Parents, and therefore would not admit any one to ſuch Retirement, Monaſtick Diſcipline, or Vow of Celibacy, without the conſent and good will of their Parents, tho' things were then much otherwiſe, than now, or of late. And yet the Men who by theſe Vows and Promiſes, ſet the Children at liberty from their Parents, are ſo reſtrain'd by Dif. II.

Diſ. II. ſenſe, and the reaſon of the thing, that they will not admit any of the Male kind to make ſuch Vow of Religious Life till 14 or 16 Years of Age, nor any of the Female till 12, which does not at all juſtify them, for thoſe are not the Years of Conſideration and Diſcretion; the Light of Reaſon does but then begin to ſhine forth; they have commonly then juſt Wit enough, to think they have more underſtanding than they have: To be conceited, confident, and eaſily to be impos'd upon by the gay appearances, and pompous ſnares that are laid for them. A more mature Age, and a diſpoſition naturally propenſe to a devout and ſolitary Life, might make ſuch choice more reaſonably to be complied with by the Parent; for Age and Natural inclination are the things that moſt excuſably emancipate and free a Son or Daughter, from following the Councels or Commands of Parents: Tho' what that Age is, will beſt be determined by Cuſtom and Conſent of People. This caſe is now out of Doors with us, and we have not any like it, that I can think on, where Men pretend to free the Children from obeying their Parents Commands, upon the account of doing *a better thing*, the giving themſelves up to

to God. I only mentioned it, to ſhew, Diſc. II.
that tho' the Commands of Parents are never to be preferr'd to the Commands of God, yet that thoſe Commands muſt needs be plain and certain; and that Children are not at liberty to withſtand the Commands of their Parents, upon pretence of doing things truly Good and Religious, and *obeying God rather than Man.* When they obey God rather than Man (whom they ſhould otherwiſe obey) the Command of God muſt be as evident as the Command of their Parents, *i. e.* they muſt be certainly Gods Commands.

Secondly, it is alſo certain, that *the Laws of our Country* are to take place, of the private Commands of our Parents: that is, we are not tied to obey our Parents when they command us any thing contrary to the Laws of the Land; no more than when they command things contrary to the Laws of God. The reaſon of which is this, that the Publick good being greater, and to be preferr'd to any Mans private good, and without which all private Men could have and enjoy no good, it cannot be preſerv'd but by obedience to ſuch Laws as are made to ſecure it. And therefore no one can have right to ſuch obedi-

Diſ. II. ence as would obſtruct the Publick good, which all Laws are preſum'd to conſult eſpecially. And a Man muſt not compare the Benefits he receives from his Parents, with the Benefits the Publick would receive by his ſingle obedience to the Laws; but with the Benefits the Community receives from the obedience of every ſingle Subject, and then he will ſee that it is more reaſonable the Laws ſhould be obeyed rather than any Private Man againſt them; for if one Son may obey his Parent, againſt the Laws, ſo may another and then more; and therefore it is certain that none may; for no ones good is to be conſidered in competition with the Publick. If a Father therefore ſhould command his Son to betray his Country, ſet the Capitol on fire, blow up the Magazine, bear falſe Witneſs, give his opinion contrary to the Laws, or be inſtrumental to the overthrowing the Conſtitutions of the Kingdom, he muſt not ſo honour his Father, as to obey any ſuch Commands. He muſt ſay as *Ageſilaus* ſaid to his Father, adviſing him to give a Judgment againſt the Laws. *You have your ſelf Sir taught me to obſerve the Laws from my Youth up, and I am now going on to obey you,*

you, in taking care to keep them. They are, in all ſuch caſes, to appeal to their Parents better inform'd; they are to preſume them always willing that the Children ſhould do juſt and honeſt things, and not ſo much to mind what they bid them do, when *concern'd*, as what they would have them do, when out of that concern. Diſ. II.

Theſe are the two Caſes in which Children are exempted from obeying the Commands of their Parents; when either the Laws of God, or of the Land, interpoſe, we are to hearken to them. And even in theſe Caſes, we are to diſobey our Parents, with great modeſty and tenderneſs; not with upbraidings and reproaches, with high and ſcornful refuſals, but by declining and avoiding ſuch Commands with all the gentle arts, and methods of ſubmiſſion poſſible. *Even in a Righteous cauſe, the Language of the Children muſt be humble to the Parents*, ſaith *Salvian:* Becauſe they can not, or will not obey, they muſt not therefore triumph and grow inſolent. One ſhould not eaſily appear to underſtand that any wicked and unlawful thing is commanded by our Parents: But at no hand we muſt comply with any ſuch Commands. In other Caſes, of matters indifferent,

Diſ. II. Obedience is the ſure ſide; and yet there is great regard to be had to the Age, and to the Cuſtoms of the Country, and the diſcretion of the Children; and to the circumſtances of the Parents, before one can well determine of the Obedience that is due: Without conſidering theſe and other particulars, it will not be eaſie to paſs a true judgment in the moſt common caſe, and the moſt neceſſary to be conſidered, and that is, the Marriage of Children without, or againſt the conſent of Parents, whether this be conſiſtent with the Obedience due to Parents, and be not a violation of the *5th* Commandment.

It is not indeed expreſly ſaid in Scripture, that Children ſhall not marry without the conſent, or againſt the will of their Parents; but it is expreſly ſaid, that *they ſhall honour and obey them*, and it will be hard to reconcile marrying againſt conſent with honouring the Parents; or marrying againſt command with obeying them. And generally ſpeaking, the Inſtances and Examples of Marriage in Scriptures, are ſuch as ſhew the Parents had the chiefeſt hand in making of them up. The Stile ſtill was, That *ſuch a one gave his Son, or Daughter to ſuch a one in marriage.* So that the Law being given particularly

ticularly to the *Jews*, and this being the general practice amongſt them, it is not unreaſonable to think, they held themſelves oblig'd by this Law, not to marry againſt their Parents will and conſent: But whether oblig'd by this Law, or no, the cuſtom was ſuch that it was ſeldom otherwiſe. 'Tis probable that in the Patriarchal Age, *Eſau* might marry againſt the conſent of his Parents, but *Eſau* has all along a bad Character, and yet it is not certain that *he* married againſt command, but only certain that his Wives prov'd very troubleſom and vexatious to *Rebeccah*. Diſ. II.

It is alſo certain that ſuch was the Cuſtom amongſt the *Greeks* and *Romans*, two of the wiſeſt and moſt civiliz'd People of all the World. There would be no end of Citations, to this purpoſe, out of their Books, they are full of them; and though there muſt be many *Examples* to the contrary, yet are there no *Rules* or *Precepts* in favour of the Childrens liberty, but when they take it, it is ſtill with blame. Nay, this diſpoſal of Children by Parents, is not only a matter reaſonable and fair, and approv'd by wiſe and good Men among them, and ſtrengthen'd by cuſtom uncontroll'd and immemorial, but it paſs'd into Laws and Statutes. They reckoned there

Diſ. II. there was no marriage without the conſent of the Parents, and the Children were all accounted Baſtards: And Chriſtianity for a great while made no alterations in the matter, the Civil Laws of Chriſtian Emperors confirm'd the Opinion of the Ancients, and the Sentence of the *Church* went along with them, the *Canons*, and the Judgment of the beſt Writers are all on this ſide: They ſtill make the Conſent of Parents eſſential to the Contract. The Laws of our own Nation take no notice of conſent of Parents, they truſt it, I believe, to the reaſon of the thing it ſelf, and to the wiſdom of all Ages, and to the cuſtom and example of almoſt all Nations; but the *Canons* of our Church dare not venture that, but poſitively require the conſent of Parents; they [101] tell us, that *it is not lawful for any Children* (unleſs arrived to the Age of 21) *to make any Marriage-contract without the conſent of their Parents, or, in caſe they are dead, of their Guardians and Governours*; and that is one good end, ſhe propoſes in publiſhing the *Banns* of Matrimony, that the Parents and People concern'd may know whether they think fit to agree to their Childrens choice, or no. And that this end may not be defeated by the ſecrecy of Licences, it is requir'd, *that one of the Parties ſhould depoſe on Oath, that*

that consent of the Parents is not wanting, before they can obtain the Licence. This care our Church takes, tho' much in vain, which sufficiently shews her opinion of the matter, how far she reckons the consent of Parents necessary. Dis. II.

But to all this, it is but reasonable to hear and consider, what may be answered by the Children. Marriage is certainly a state and condition upon which the happiness or misery of Life does very much depend; more than indeed most People think upon before-hand. To be confin'd to live with one perpetually, of whom we have no liking and esteem, must certainly be a most uneasy State; there had need be a great many good Qualities to reconcile a constant Conversation to one, even where there is some share of Kindness and Affection; but without *Love* the very best of all good Qualities will never make a constant Conversation easy and delightful. And whence proceed those endless and innumerable domestick Miseries, that plague, and utterly confound so many Families, but from want of Love and Kindness in the Wife or Husband? From thence comes their Neglect, and careless Management of Affairs at Home, and their profuse, extravagant Expences made Abroad. In a Word, it

is

Diſ. II. is not eaſy, as it is not needful, to recount the Evils that ariſe, abundantly from the want of Conjugal Affection only. And ſince this is ſo certain, a Man or Woman runs the moſt fearful Hazard that can be, who marries without this affection in themſelves, and without good aſſurance of it in the other. And ſince it is impoſſible for any one to love with another's Affections, but with their own, the Parents muſt conſider this eſpecially, how they engage their Children to marry, where, at the leaſt, a hopeful Proſpect of this Love doth not appear; leſt, whilſt they are endeavouring to make their Children happy, they make them of all Creatures the moſt miſerable; and make them irremediably ſo. If there be reaſon that Young People ſhould be left in any thing to themſelves, and to their own liberty, it ſeems to be in the choice of thoſe, with whom they are to live and die; with whom they are to venture being happy or unhappy all their Days. It is, without doubt, in nothing ſo neceſſary as in Marriage. *Do you not know* (ſaith one of old) *that Marriages belong to us our ſelves, and muſt be matter of our choice. Our Affections are our Maſters, not our Servants; and you cannot with all y ur Power and Might, nor by your frequently*

quently reiterated Orders and Commands, cauſe me to love or hate where you ſhall fix; nor is it in my power to obey you, if I would. Then is Marriage like to be laſtingly happy, when both agree in loving each the other; and therefore ſince I am to have a Wife, the Partner of my Bed, and of all the Joys and Sorrows that are likely to befal me, whilſt I live, I muſt ſeek for one that I can like (I think) for ever. I do not ſay that this is all as reaſonable as it ſhould be, but there is reaſon enough in it, to make the Parents very careful and conſidering, that they urge not their Authority too far, in conſtraining their Children to marry, not only where there is no viſible Averſion, but where there is great likelyhood that there will not be a good Agreement. Dif. II.

As for the Cuſtom and the Practice of the *Jews*, and all the *Eaſterlings*, together with the *Greeks* and *Romans*, they do indeed ſufficiently evidence the Power and Authority that Parents exerciſed in the diſpoſal of their Children; but they do not, for all that, ſhew the reaſonableneſs of ſuch Authority, nor is it, of the Law of Nature ſo to do. And beſides, they had, ſome of them, Power of Life and Death, and did ſometimes *expoſe*, and might, by allowance, *ſell* their Children into

Diſ. II. into Slavery; which are Privileges that do not naturally or reaſonably attend the Parental Authority and Relation, and therefore there is great abatement to be made from all Arguments, that conclude only from Cuſtoms and Uſages, tho' of wiſe and civiliz'd People.

The *Roman* Law-givers (ſaith a *Grecian*, *S. Empir*) have put the Children in the Parent's Power, in the ſame Capacity with Slaves; the Parents are the Maſters of them and all they have, till they are emancipated as Slaves are, which other People look upon as tyrannical. The *Roman* Laws (ſays another, *Simplic. in Epiſt.*) having regard, as well to the natural Superiority of Parents, as to the Care and Pains the Parents take about their Children, and willing alſo that the Children ſhould be ſubject to their Parents, without exception, and truſting alſo, I believe, to their Natural Affection, gave them, not only Power, to ſell their Children, but alſo to put them to Death, if they ſaw fit. I ſee no reaſon to think that Parents are by Nature, Maſters of the Liberty and Life of the Children; and if the Laws of any Kingdom make them ſo, they had their reaſons probably for ſo doing, and ought to be obeyed; but there is no inferring that the Children of other

other Kingdoms, where no ſuch Laws have being, are oblig'd to the ſame obedience; and therefore though the Nations abroad had abſolutely the command of their Children, ſo as to diſpoſe of them in Marriage, how and where they pleas'd; yet is not their Example ſufficient to juſtifie a Parent in doing the like, any farther than the thing is otherwiſe fit among us; and Children with *us*, are not tied to ſuch a ſtrict obedience, in this ſingle point, only becauſe the Children of the *Jews*, or *Greeks*, or *Romans* might be. Diſ. II.

And beſides, regard is to be had to the *Cuſtoms* of the Country, the *Jews*, as all the People of the *Eaſt*, ſpeaking generally, did not ſuffer the Women to go abroad as ours do; they went to viſit a Relation, or a near Friend, and that ſparingly, and mixed not with common Company, which, with the modeſty peculiar to that Sex, depriv'd them of the opportunities of diſpoſing of themſelves, ſo that their Parents only muſt or could diſpoſe of them; and when they were once married, they kept very much at home, and ſaw but little ſtrange Company. The *Greeks* and *Romans* ſeem to have had more liberty, but yet, as well as I can gueſs, not near ſo much as *ours* have. This, I take it, ought to make ſome little

Diſ. II. tle difference, for if the Cuſtoms of a Country allow the Women liberty to ſee and to be ſeen of all, both before and after Marriage, they make it ſomewhat more reaſonable for them to chooſe their Partners, with whom they are to live, not in confinement, but at liberty; that they may not afterwards diſlike their Partners, nor be betraid by ſuch their liberty, into new liking and deſires of thoſe they never can obtain. And for the *Sons* of theſe old People, there is yet more reaſon, why they ſhould be entirely at the diſpoſal of their Parents, than the Daughters, and that, becauſe Marriage was not half ſo grievous to them, for they were allowed more Wives than one; and Divorces were cheap and eaſie, and they took great liberties beſides, with whom they could; and therefore if they liked not the Condition or Perſon of a Wife, they either wandred from her Bed, and took unlawful courſes, (which they might do, it was ſo common, without much ſcandal or ill fame) or elſe they quickly found occaſion for Divorce, and therefore to be married by their Parents, although againſt their liking, and conſent, was no great hardſhip; the Cuſtoms of the Nation, and the Licence of the Times, gave them a world of liberty; and this made it much more rea-

reaſonable for the *Sons* to be entirely at their Parents diſpoſal, than the *Daughters*. Diſ. II.

But the caſe of Chriſtians is much otherwiſe, they have no liberty allowed of any kind, Chriſt hath obliged them, to love each other, and no other, even till Death; each Chriſtian Pair is now reduc'd to their Original Standard, and are to be as *Eve* and *Adam* were to each the other, faithful and kind, without ſo much as hope of changing. This makes it to be infinitely more the intereſt and concern of Chriſtians, to look they marry none but whom they love, and ſtill intend to love, than of other People, whoſe Laws and Cuſtoms allowed them greater liberties; and therefore it is not altogether fair, to urge the Inſtances and Examples of theſe ſort of People, too far, in a Chriſtian Kingdom; for they might much more reaſonably (becauſe more eaſily) ſubmit to the will and commands of their Parents, than Chriſtians in ſome caſes of Marriage can. And when Parents remember that their commands are to lay obligations on their Children, that will laſt when they themſelves are dead and gone; and from which they never can be freed, though all the evils in the World ſhould happen to them; they will be cautious

Diſ. II. and ſparing how they lay ſuch commands upon them, againſt their inclination and liking. However, there will always be ſome difference betwixt Childrens refuſing, with all ſubmiſſion and reſpect, to comply with the commands of their Parents in marrying ſuch whom they are ſure they do not love; and their marrying where they will, without the conſent, or againſt the commands of their Parents. The diſobedience of the one, is much more pardonable and pittiable than the diſobedience of the other; becauſe it is much more in Peoples power to keep themſelves free from engaging their Affections, than it is to ſettle them where *other* People pleaſe; and to refuſe to marry where commanded, is not ſo likely to do any injury, or diſhonour, as to marry, againſt command, is to do both or either. And yet, in excuſe of ſuch diſobedience, as marrying of themſelves, reſpect and conſideration are to be had to Peoples Age and Condition.

The Cuſtoms of the World and Reaſon, conſent, in giving People ſtill more liberty, the older they grow; they are not to be maſters of themſelves whilſt young, becauſe their reaſon and underſtanding are imperfect, they have not judgment enough to conſider what is good

or

or evil for them; their Paſſions and Af- Diſ II.
fections are ſtrong and prevalent, and al-
ways looking towards Pleaſure, and they have not conſideration enough to correct or check the diſorders of their will, and deſires; and if theſe be the true cauſes why they ought to be ſubject to the will and commands of Parents and Superiors, whilſt young, it is but fit, that as theſe wear off, and reaſon and underſtanding and judgment ſucceed, their chains ſhould alſo wear away, and their reſtraint be leſſened, and they ſhould grow up to full liberty. This, we ſee, is generally allowed in *ſecond* Marriages: The firſt does ſo emancipate and free the Children from the Fathers power, that it is not accounted diſobedience, when they marry the ſecond time without conſent. Now this is not, becauſe the Parents are no longer Parents, nor the Children tied to dutiful Obedience; but becauſe that greater age and reaſon make folks fitter to conſider themſelves, and to look after their own affairs. It is indeed a Maxim, that they who are once emancipated and ſet free, do never return to Servitude, and therefore the Children being once freed from their Parents authority by Marriage, come not again under their Power, as to a ſecond Marriage; but I believe, that fulneſs of

Diſ. II. Age, Maturity of Judgment, Sobriety and Staidneſs of Mind and Temper, are better reaſons for Childrens liberty, and exemption from ſome commands of their Parents, than their being once Married: For if a *Minor* marry diſobediently, and be afterwards ſet at liberty by his Partners Death, whilſt he is ſtill young and under Age, whatever the Laws may do, yet reaſon certainly ſubjects him to his Parents power, in the choice of a ſecond Wife, as it did of the firſt; he is not emancipated by his firſt folly and diſobedience, he ſtill wants the care and tutelage of his Parents; ſo that it is at the bottom, Age, and Diſcretion, and Ability to look after themſelves, which do exempt the Children from the ſubjection of their Parents, in matters that are ſo *Perſonal*, and ſo much the Childrens own concern and intereſt. And therefore Parents are eſpecially to have regard to the age and wiſdom of their Children; and the Childrens diſobedience in theſe caſes will be more or leſs excuſable, as age and wiſdom ſet them more at liberty.

And ſometimes it will ſo happen, that the Childrens marrying themſelves, will be in ſome meaſure excuſable, by the Parents neglect and backwardneſs of taking ſuch care, as is but neceſſary, in many of thoſe

thoſe caſes; and therefore ſome Laws have left the Children wholly at their liberty to marry at ſuch an Age, if their Parents looked not after it before. Theſe and many other things, may be ſaid in behalf of Children, either refuſing to marry ſuch as their Parents command them to marry, or that marry according to their own liking, againſt command. And there is ſo much to be ſaid on both ſides, and ſo many things to be conſidered particularly on each, that it is neither ſafe nor true, to affirm, that all Parents in all caſes have a right to the compliance and obedience of their Children; or that all Children are at liberty to marry and diſpoſe of themſelves, without their Parents; for neither of theſe Propoſitions are unexceptionably true. Parents have a great power, but they muſt uſe it, (as truly, moſt generally they will, and do) like Parents, *i. e.* tenderly and kindly; and Children have a great duty, but they are not tied like Slaves in all caſes, and with bonds that will laſt for ever; but when they do not obey, they muſt do it with unwillingneſs, and great reluctance; and it muſt be in caſes of great and laſting moment and concern, and ſuch, as when repreſented to fair and equal, wiſe and underſtanding People, they may find Dif. II.

Diſ. II. themſelves both pittied for their Trial, and approv'd for their Reſolution: That thoſe who would be glad that Children ſhould obey their Parents, may ſee it reaſonable they ſhould *not* be obeyed in theſe Particulars; for to ſay what the truth is, the affections of Parents are generally ſo ſtrong, and their intentions ſo good, towards their Children, that the preſumption of *right* is generally on their ſide; and the cauſe of the Children had needs be very juſt and righteous, and apparently reaſonable and good, when they diſpute or contend with Parents, becauſe the biaſs of the whole World is, with much reaſon, on their ſide againſt the Children.

The ſum of what hath been ſaid, amounts, I think, to this. When the certain Laws of God, and the Laws of the Land, and of our Superiors, lay their commands or prohibitions on them, the Parents have nothing to do but to forward the Obedience of their Children; they are not to injoyn them any thing, prejudicial to the obligations they lie under to God and to their Country, nor to command them in oppoſition to them: And when they do, they are not to be heard or underſtood; the Children are to go on ſteadily in their Duty to both, and to *miſtake* their Parents orders, with ſubmiſſion and reſpect,

reſpect, and tenderneſs. And in the caſe of Marriages, the Parents are to take all due care, to ſee their Children well diſpos'd of, according to their Age and Quality and Tempers, remembring they are then laying the grounds and foundation of their Happineſs or Miſery; and not to let the conſideration of fortune and eſtate ſo preponderate and overweigh all other conſiderations of form and favour, birth and education, virtue and good qualities, as to neglect them all; and when the Parents have done this, the Children are to obey as far as poſſibly they can; the little objections of the fancy, and the niceties that are commonly made on theſe occaſions, muſt yield to the mature deliberations of the Parents. It were beſt, and moſt to be wiſh'd undoubtedly, that both the Parents and the Children might chooſe, *i. e.* that each ſhould approve the others choice: And that, as *Homer* ſays of *Penelope*, ſhe might be beſtowed by her *Father*, upon whom *ſhe* pleas'd, for otherwiſe they will not both be eaſie; and when that comes to paſs, the Authority of Parents, and the Duty of Children are both ſecur'd and reconcil'd. Diſ. II.

But if this will not be, there will go near to be ſome fault on one ſide; if the Parent offer what the Child cannot

Diſ. II. poſſibly aſſent to, and what the Neighbourhood, and wiſe and unconcerned Perſons blame, condemn, and reject, upon a competent and reaſonable information of the whole Proceedings; if ſuch refuſal of the offer be made with decency, and great humility, upon the Childrens part, it will not fall under the head of ſinful Diſobedience; they may ſtand off, with innocence and ſafety, and yet may *honour*, as they ought, *their Father and their Mother*. But if ſuch offer be made by the Parents, as a wiſe and good Man, in the like caſe and circumſtances, may make, without folly and without injury, and there be nothing handſom or material to object, and ſuch as would ſatisfie a wiſe and ſober and impartial Man, the Duty of Children ſo refuſing will not be ſafe, they muſt, for ought I ſee, obey their Parents in theſe caſes. And if Children who are under Age, and wholly in their Fathers Cuſtody and Power, and part of his Houſe and Family, will venture to engage themſelves, without the conſent, or againſt the commands of their Parents, to their diſhonour, or their prejudice, they will be guilty of ſinful Diſobedience, and muſt ſeek the forgiveneſs they will want both at Gods and their Parents Hands. How far Obedience in theſe caſes is alſo due to the

Mothers,

Mothers, by virtue of this Commandment, both whilſt the Father lives, and afterwards; I intend, if it pleaſe God, to ſhew, with other particulars, in the following Diſcourſe. Diſ. II.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe. III.

Exod. xx. Verſe 12.

Duty of Children to Parents.

HAving ſhewn the neceſſity there is, that Children ſhould be obedient *to*, and govern'd *by* their Parents, in all things, where they are at liberty by the Laws of God, and of their Country, and in common ſenſe and reaſon ought to be at liberty; I am, before I leave this Head, to ſpeak a little to the Authority of *Mothers*, and to the Obedience that is due to them, both whilſt the Fathers are alive, and after they are dead. The Scriptures make no manner of difference betwixt the Obedience, Fear, or Honour, due to Parents; the *Mother* is ſtill included, ſtill expreſſed, with the Father. *Honour thy Father and Mother. He that ſmiteth his Father or Mother, ſhall ſurely be put to Death*, Exod. 21. 15. *He that curſeth his Father or Mother, ſhall ſurely be put to Death*, Verſe 17. *Ye ſhall fear eve-*

ry

ry Man his Mother and Father. If a Man hath a Rebellious Son, which will not obey the voice of his Father, or the voice of his Mother, then ſhall his Father and his Mother lay hold on him, and ſay, this our Son is ſtubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, Deut. 21. 18. And, *Curſed be he that ſetteth light by his Father or his Mother*, 28. 16. And, *My Son, hear the Inſtructions of thy Father, and forſake not the Law of thy Mother*; and ſo in many other places, where the ſame Duty is requir'd to be paid the Mother, with the Father; and in truth, there is equal reaſon in moſt caſes, why we ſhould do ſo, and in ſome, greater. The Mothers undergo moſt pain and ſorrow for them, bear all the trouble of their Infancy and Childhood, do all they can for them, and intend them much more; have at leaſt the ſame, but generally a much greater affection to them, and the ſame intereſt and concern for their good and welfare. And therefore in Nature, and true Reaſon, and Gratitude, the Children are obliged to make no difference betwixt the Father and Mother, in their Obſervance and Obedience of, and to them. Dif. III.

But becauſe the Father is alſo ſuperiour to the Mother, both in Natural Strength, in Wiſdom, and by God's appointment, and

Dif. III. and that there is no obeying contrary commands, therefore the Children are eſpecially to obey the Fathers, in caſes where they have power to command, and where they cannot obey both Parents together: They muſt never obey one Parent to the prejudice of the other: The Father has no right to command the Children any thing undutiful, diſreſpectful, or injurious to the Mother; but if it happen that the inclinations or deſires of Mothers, ſhould differ from thoſe of the Fathers, in the choice of Trade, or Calling, or in Matches for the Children, or other things of moment; ſo that the Children muſt diſpleaſe one Parent by complying with the other; the Father is the Superiour Authority, and muſt be obeyed, becauſe both the Laws of God and Man have ſubjected the Wife to the Husband; ſhe is not preſum'd to have a *Will* contrary to her Huſbands, and therefore the Child diſobeys not his Mother, who obeys his Father's command, becauſe the Mother is to be obedient alſo: And the caſe is not very much altered, although the Father do not lay expreſs command upon the Child, but is paſſive and content, likes and approves the choice he makes, although the Mother be wholly averſe to it, in ſuch a caſe the Father is to be regarded, for he is the proper Superiour. But

But when the Mother is the *only* Parent, then her Authority increaſes, and ſhe is then ſolely to be regarded; But the Civil Laws do generally free the Sons at ſuch an Age, ſuppoſing them the Maſters of the Family, and by the advantage of their Sex and Education, fit to govern, and diſpoſe of themſelves and their Affairs. The Daughters are indeed kept longer in Subjection, ſuppos'd to want the Care and Wiſdom of the Parents longer, but growing up to liberty, as they advance in Years and Underſtanding. There can indeed be no exact Rules in any ſuch Caſes, for the Wiſdom of either, Parent, or Children, muſt neceſſarily make ſome alteration in the meaſures of Obedience, in reſpect to ſome Commands which relate ſo nearly to the Children, as Marriage eſpecially does. Diſ. III.

And even in Caſes where the Sons and Daughters may be reaſonably preſum'd at liberty, and would otherwiſe take and uſe that liberty, yet unleſs it be a matter of great moment, it ſhould not eaſily be ventur'd on, to the Mothers great ſorrow; for the grief of Parents is not to be occaſion'd cheaply and lightly; much will be ſuffered by a dutiful good-natur'd Child, before he will afflict and grieve his Parent; and ſince

Diſ. III. ſince this is eſpecially the infirmity and feebleneſs of Mothers, the Children are oblig'd to greater care and circumſpection in their behaviour towards them, to prevent their ſorrows; for every thing that gives them grief, is a ſort of diſobedience. I will end this whole matter, with forewarning Children, of what will certainly come to paſs; and that is, that they will never be able to remember any act of diſobedience to their Parents, without much trouble and remorſe, without great ſorrow and concern of mind, it will dwell continually upon them, and haunt them like an Evil Spirit; they will wiſh a thouſand times, they had behav'd themſelves more dutifully, kindly, and obediently, and rather gone without their deſires than have occaſion'd any trouble or ſorrow to their Parents.

The laſt thing that Children owe their Parents, is *ſupport* and *ſuſtenance*, and this is evidently comprehended under the word *Honour*. *God commanded*, (ſaith our Saviour, *Math.* 15. 4.) *ſaying, Honour thy Father and Mother, and he that curſeth Father or Mother, let him die the Death. But ye ſay, whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Father or Mother, It is* Corban, *i. e. a Gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt*

mighteſt be profited by me, and Honour not his Father and his Mother; he ſhall be free, and ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his Father or his Mother, as it is in St. *Mark* 7. 12. God commanded the *Jews* to honour their Parents; But the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, by their Tradition had ſometimes made the Command of no effect, by teaching the People, that if once they had devoted their Eſtate to God's Service, or to the Service of the Temple, either to purchaſe Wood, or Frankincenſe, or Doves, or any thing uſed about the Altar, if they had Conſecrated their Eſtate to Holy Uſes, they were thereby diſcharged, from ſuccouring their Parents, when they came to ſtand in need, ſo that if either Father or Mother came to want their very bread and daily ſuſtenance, the Children might refuſe it them, and ſay—No, it is *Corban*; that by which thou mighteſt have been profited by me, is a Gift: The Eſtate, wherewith I might have ſuccoured and ſupported you, is *Corban*, it is devoted to the Service of God and his Temple; and I may not ſacrilegiouſly take away ought devoted to Holy Uſes, to feed my Parents, and thus ſaith Chriſt, you make void a certain Command of God, by a Tradition of Dif III.

Diſ. III. of your own, and ſet the Children free from honouring their Parents: Which he expreſſes in St. *Mark*, *thus ye ſuffer them not to do ought for their Father and Mother.* From whence it appears very plainly, that *to honour Parents*, comprehends the ſuccouring and ſupporting them, under their Burthens and Neceſſities, and that this *fifth* Commandment certainly enjoyns the doing ſo, to all Children. So the word *Honour* is taken in 1 *Tim.* 5. 3. and 17 *Verſes*. *Honour Widows, that are Widows indeed*, i. e. Let the Widows who are in want, and behave themſelves ſoberly and diſcreetly, and chaſtly; be reliev'd and maintain'd, amongſt you. And *let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, eſpecially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.* Let the Miniſters that perform their Duties well, and wiſely as they ſhould, be accounted worthy of a maintenance better than ordinary; Not that the *Jews* were at all inclin'd to be unnatural to their Parents, or to deny them what they wanted, but that ſuch a Doctrine might conſtrain them to be ſo, if believ'd: And our Saviour's Diſcourſe is particularly directed againſt the corrupt Gloſſes and the falſe Traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees.

The

Dis. III.

The Jews were remarkably kind and tender to their Parents in Distress. It was a common saying with them, *You must honour God, with your Substance, if you have it; but you must honour your Parents, whether you have it or* no, *for you must* beg *for them: And more than that, you must work, tho' it were in the Publick Houses of Correction, to help your Parents.* This, I believe, was the Foundation of the Parents Power to sell their Children; it must be, either, when they knew they could not be maintain'd but by such Sale, or when they could not themselves maintain their Children, and therefore sold them, that they might live. The Practice is too barbarous and unnatural, to be supported by any other Ground, or Reason; nothing but such extream necessity, could make it tollerable; such a Power, is not then strictly just, but the exercise of it is excusable, because 'tis unavoidable.

But all these things are determinable by the Civil Laws of Nations, and therefore they differ in several Countries, but all agree in exacting and commanding the Relief and Sustenance of Parents. *We must honour our Parents exceedingly*, saith Hierocles, *affording them the Service of our Bodies, and the use of our Wealth most chearfully.* And

Dis. III. amongst the *Romans*, if a Son were quite emancipated and free from his Father's Government, yet if his Father came to want, and were denied it by his Son, the Son, for his ingratitude, was to return again into his Father's Service, and never to be freed again. By *Solon*'s Law, the Son indeed might deny this aliment and sustenance to his Father, in case his Father had neglected so to educate the Son, as to have put him in a way of making such Provision for his Indigent Parent; if he had neither put him out to any Trade, nor taught him how to get his Living, it was presum'd the Father had in a manner *expos'd* him to misery, and therefore deserv'd not the return of Love and Kindness he had never shewn. But this was only to constrain the Parent to look after the Education of his Children, to make them thereby the more useful Members of the Common-wealth: it exempted the Children from the Legal Penalties that otherwise might be inflicted on such unnatural refusal, but it took not away the obligation the Children had by Nature, to provide for their distressed Parents. Even this severe Law, tied not the Children to be cruel and undutiful, but intended to punish the Parents folly and neglect, by leaving it to the Children

to

to deal with their Parents as they pleas'd, which otherwiſe they might not do, but were oblig'd to provide for them. For this Support and Maintenance of Parents, is a thing ſo naturally and neceſſary due, that no Laws can tye the Children not to afford it, according to their beſt Abilities. It would be due even to a Traitor, and proſcrib'd; that is, bare ſuſtenance would be due from Children to their Parents, in ſuch hard caſes. Diſ. III.

Theſe are the Duties Children owe their Parents; *Love*, *Reſpect*, or *Honour*, *Obedience*, and *Support* of all kinds, whenever they ſtand in need of it; and all of them comprehended under *Honouring* them, all of them enjoyn'd to Children in this Command—*Honour thy Father and thy Mother.*

But becauſe the Caſe of *going to Law with Parents*, is what does ſometimes happen, and yet would not properly fall under any of the fore-mentioned Heads, and yet deſerves to be conſidered, it may not be unſeaſonable to ſpeak a little to it, before I go on to the Promiſe and Encouragement annex'd by God, to the honouring of our Father, and Mother.

If therefore the Enquiry be, whether it be lawful at any time, *for any Cauſe*, for Children to call their Parents into queſti-

Diſ. III. on before the Civil Magiſtrate or Judge; it is to be anſwered, *affirmatively*, but with many Reſtrictions. It is certain that Parents have a great Authority, but 'tis as certain that they may abuſe it: They are not incapable of *doing* Injury. It is alſo certain that Children are to be very *ſubject* to their Parents, but as ſure alſo that they are not *Slaves*, but may *receive* injury. And whoever can ſuffer wrong, may alſo be righted: The Laws of God do no where forbid this; and the Laws of the Land are free and impartial, they make no difference of Perſons, and know no Relation; Juſtice is in this reſpect to be blind: And therefore it is certain, that in ſome Caſes, a Son or Daughter may, without offence of God's Law, appeal to the Laws of the Land, againſt their Parents.

In caſe of *alimony*, if the Parent be ſo unnatural, as to deny the Child its Food and Rayment, the remedy at Law may be juſtly implor'd, and no one would charge with undutiful and diſobedient Carriage, a Child that ſhould implore aſſiſtance in ſuch caſe. So if a Parent ſhould ſo cruelly uſe a Child, as to diſmember it, or make it lame, or do it any other laſting miſchief, the Child might very juſtly make the Caſe known to the Magiſtrate, and

and beg his favour and assistance. In these and such like Cases, the Common Sense and Pity of Mankind, would teach us, that such complaint were not a breach of Childrens Duty to Parents, but very consistent with it. And yet this is one way of Childrens going to Law with their Parents. But here, the occasion must be, we see, exceeding great and pressing, and visibly, to wise impartial People, reasonable and just. It is not allowed to make even these Complaints, upon any slight mischief; it must be sharp, and very near intollerable, before the Children must appeal to Magistrates. For tho' there are no positive Laws, yet Reason, Custom, and Consent of People, give such Power of Castigation and Correction to Parents, that the Laws forbid to any one besides; presuming always that the occasion will be very just, and the provocation very great, when the Parents proceed to much severity; the Laws still trust, as well they may, a great deal to the Parental kindness and affection. And yet they see sometimes that there is need of interposing their Authority, and hindring Passion from proceeding to Extremities. And in all such Cases, the Children are to ask for nothing but relief and ease to themselves; no hardship, penalty, Dis. III.

Diſ. III. nalty, or puniſhment, is to be ſought for, to the Parent, by them; that would be impious cruelty indeed; no thought of revenge muſt come into their minds: They will be miſerable enough in having ſuch Parents as will provoke them to fly from *them*, for ſuccour, to a *ſtranger*, without the trouble and uneaſineſs of ſeeing them miſerable and ſuffering any Evil.

And as for matters of Contract, Eſtate, Inheritance, or Money, it muſt not be for any ſmall matter, nor for a light injury, nor any thing eaſy to be born, that a Child can implead his Parent; the hardſhip muſt be near intollerable; the injuſtice great and preſſing, when a wiſe indifferent Man, or a Man's own Conſcience can permit him to go to Law with his Father or Mother. We are oblig'd, as Chriſtians, to bear *ſomewhat* at every ones Hands, and little injuries are the leaſt we can forgive to one another. And common Senſe and Reaſon will tell one, he is certainly oblig'd to bear more from a Parent, than from any other: And therefore the provocation and neceſſity muſt be exceeding Great and Violent, when it is not to be paſſed over with patience and ſubmiſſion by the Children. It ſhould therefore be plain and viſible to all conſidering People, that the Parent is very

very much in the wrong, doing a manifeſt injuſtice, violating the Laws of Nature, and putting off the parental love and tenderneſs, before a Child ſhould publickly conteſt at Law: the Neighbourhood, and world around, ſhould be convinc'd of the Parents iniquity, and ſee the injury intended or done, to be intollerable, and ſee withal the neceſſity of ſeeking redreſs at the hands of Publick Juſtice, before the Children do it. Publick fame ſhould go before, and prepare the minds and ears of all that ſhall hear it, ſo that every one ſhould pitty the Childrens caſe, in having to deal with ſo injurious Parents, and be concern'd to wiſh them ſucceſs: By all which I mean to ſay, that the juſtice of the Childrens Cauſe muſt be notorious, and the injury done them manifeſtly great, and grievous to them, before they are permitted, by their Duty, Decency, and Religion, to go to Law with their Parents. Diſ. III.

The Duty indeed is ſomewhat altered in the caſe of Mothers, when they haſten to ſecond Marriages, apparently prejudicial to their Children. The neceſſity of going to Law with *them*, is more frequent and more urgent than with Fathers, or with Mothers ſtill continuing in the ſtate of Widdowhood; becauſe they ſeem to have tranſlated their Affection and Inte-

Diſ. III. reſt to another Family; and moſt of the comforts and conveniencies ariſing from ſuch conteſted Money or Eſtate, go to *ſtrange* People, to whom the Children have no Obligation; and therefore that Piety in Children that would permit the Mother to enjoy in peace and quiet, what was perhaps in juſtice none of hers, need not ſometimes be ſcrupulous of recovering it from her, ſince ſhe her ſelf would have the leaſt advantage by it, but it would go to utter Strangers.

While ſhe continues in a ſtate of Widowhood, ſhe is their Mother ſtill, and they are all of one piece and Family, ſhe is preſum'd to intend nothing but their Advantage, and all ſhe has is look'd upon as theirs; and therefore if ſhe, through covetous deſire, or through miſtake, or peeviſhneſs, will needs retain, what does not properly belong to her, the Children, if it can conſiſt with their welfare by any means, will be content to bear with ſo much loſs, or diſappointment for the preſent, ſince it will certainly be theirs at laſt, rather than give their Parent an unneceſſary grief and trouble, by going to Law. But when a new affection, and a new engagement intervene, then all the proſpect is diſturb'd, they ſee new intereſts riſing, and the new Wife is ſuppoſed

to

to make her ſelf as acceptable as ſhe can to her new choice, by bearing with her all the advantages of fortune ſhe can get together, and in ſuch caſes does, too oft, forget her Children, and her former Love. In this caſe the Children are much more at liberty, to perſue their juſt rights than otherwiſe they would be, becauſe, as I ſaid, the advantages of forbearing, would not accrue ſo much to the Parent, as to an utter Stranger, to whom the Children have little or no Obligation. Diſ III.

And yet in this caſe, the Children muſt conſider well, and take good care, that they be not overbyaſs'd by this common prejudice, that *ſecond Marriages are always prejudicial to the Childrens Rights and Intereſts*, for it is not always ſo, though it is too often; and therefore the injury muſt be great and ſure, as before, that will juſtifie the Children in their contending with their Mother, though ſhe has now forgot their Fathers Houſe and Family. But both in this and all other caſes, when the Reaſon is great and manifeſt, and the Occaſion juſt and unavoidable, the Suit is to be menag'd with all the care and tenderneſs imaginable. Conteſts at Law, are very ſeldom manag'd with ordinary and common Charity; they are full of Reproach, and full of Scandal; few People think

Diſ.III. think of any thing but vexing and afflicting their Adverſaries, and therefore have their Eyes and Ears continually open to the faults and aſperſions of their Enemies, glad to hear them repreſented ill, and willing to believe them ſo, as if they were themſelves advantag'd by it. They are perpetually contriving and inventing how to leſſen one another, and gain to themſelves credit, at the others expence; this makes the Law very hazardous, few People go out ſo innocent as they enter; they begin with deſire of *Juſtice*, and end with a deſire of *Miſchief*: They begin with calmneſs and a tender regard to their Adverſary, but proceed with Anger, and increaſe to Malice, and end, too often, with impatient longings for Revenge. Thus it is moſt commonly, when People that are Strangers, or little known to each the other go to Law together. One would hope that it ſhould not be ſo with Friends and Relations, but that their natural ties of Love, ſhould lay reſtraint upon their Paſſions, and keep them in better order. But 'tis rather all the contrary, they try at firſt, it may be, to moderate and keep themſelves in good temper, but they quickly fly out into exceſs, recriminate, complain of, and reproach each other, with more ſharpeneſs and ill-will, than other People;

People; and knowing more of each other, they are apt to proclaim more Secrets, and consequently meet with much more Credit and Belief, and consequently do each other much more Mischief. And 'tis still worse, the nearer these Relations are to each the other; when *Children* and their *Parents* strive, there is a world of danger of ill consequences. Dis. III.

It must needs be uneasie to the Parents, to be suspected of Injustice, and ill design against their own Children, and to be charg'd in publick of being so: And it must needs be uneasie to the Child, to think of striving with the Parent, and to believe the Parent ill-intentioned towards him; but this Contention does too frequently betray the Child into unkind, undutiful and hard expressions; and oftentimes the Parent, to angry Curses, and fearful Imprecations, which both good Children and good Parents would by all means avoid. The fear of Injury and hope of Victory, do so exasperate Peoples Minds, that 'tis the sense of these ill consequences, makes the going to Law of Children with their Parents so affrightful: And makes it so much more eligible to endure a great hardship, and considerable injury, than seek for remedy at Law, to the hazarding so much mischief

as

Dif. III. as does frequently enſue in ſuch unkind contentions. What joy of Victory can be to either ſide, when *they* muſt be aſham'd, confounded, and, it may be, much prejudic'd, whom we are tied, of all folks living, to honour moſt, and do the beſt ſervice to.

But after all, let one be never ſo much inclin'd to favour, and ſecure the rights and the reſpects of Parents, as Nature, Reaſon, Decency, the Laws of God and Man require, yet when the Parents put off natural affection, and have no regard to Honeſty and Juſtice, but follow blindly and perverſely their own humour, and will not be advis'd by wiſe and ſober and impartial People, to do that right to Children, which both the Laws of God and Man require and call for at their hands, no one can reaſonably condemn the Children that implore the aſſiſtance of the Laws and Magiſtrates, to get themſelves redreſs'd: Provided they do it by neceſſity, with tenderneſs, and all the reſpect and honour poſſible, never aggravating any thing done, any farther than there is need to their own vindication, of which they muſt not yet be over-tender, to the diſparagement and great blame of their Parents: They ought to be exceeding careful to conceal the faults and the miſcarriages of them:

them: I do not ſee, but the ſame piety would have endeavour'd to cover *Noahs Cruelty*, or *Injuſtice*, or *Perverſeneſs*, had he been guilty of them, that was ſo careful to conceal his *nakedneſs* and folly, for they are alſo the ſhame and nakedneſs of the underſtanding; and ſuch infirmities of the mind no leſs diſhonourable than thoſe of the body, which no one likes to diſcover in their Parents and Relations. Diſ. III.

It remains in the laſt place, that I conſider the promiſe and encouragement annexed to the performance of this Commandment. *Honour thy Father and Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* It is certain, that *the Land* here mention'd was *Canaan*, and therefore that this promiſe was particularly made to the Children of *Iſrael*. And it is alſo certain, that this promiſe of *long Life* was alſo made to them upon the fulfilling the *reſt* of Gods Commands, as well as this, the Book of *Deuteronomy* is full of this Promiſe. *See* ſaith God, 30. 16. *I have ſet before thee this day, Life and Good, Death and Evil. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Commandments and his Judgments, and his Statutes, that thou mayſt*

live

Diſ. III. *live and multiply, and the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in the Land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it.* So in 32. 47. *Set your hearts unto all the words which I teſtifie among you this day, which ye ſhall command your Children to obſerve to do, all the words of this Law, for it is not a vain thing for you, becauſe it is your life: and, through this thing, you ſhall prolong your days in the Land, whither ye go, over* Jordan, *to poſſeſs it*, and ſo in 4. 40. 5. 33. *Ye ſhall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days, in the Land which ye ſhall poſſeſs.* So in 6. 2. 11. 9. 25. 15. and other places, and ſo long life is promis'd to a King that governeth well in Deut. 17. 20. and in 22. 7. *But thou ſhalt in any wiſe let the Dam go and take the young to thee, that it may be well with, and that thou mayeſt prolong thy days*; and ſo, ſhort life is threatned to *Idolatry*, in *Deut.* 4. 26. and 30. 18. from all which places it appears, that, *long life* is as well promiſed to the performance of *other* Commands of God, as to this of honouring Parents; but it alſo appears, that by long life is not ſtrictly meant the living a great many years, but the *living happily* and well; long life is accounted a Bleſſing, and there-

therefore it is put to signifie a Blessing in the Scriptures; and in all these places, it is as if God had said; if you will live happily, and in my love and favour, in the Land to which you are now going, observe my Statutes, and keep my Commandments: that will secure to you all the Blessings you expect, and I have promised to you, in the Land of *Canaan*; whilst you do so, you shall continue Masters of your Enemies, and live in Peace and Plenty, but if you fall from your Duty and Obedience, then I will give you over into the hands of your Enemies, and you shall no longer live in and enjoy this good Land, but be delivered over to Captivity. *I denounce unto you, this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the Land, whither thou passest over* Jordan, *to go to possess it.* Deut. 30. 18. The *Jews* themselves understand it no otherwise, than of being in general *blessed*; and where God saw convenient, he blessed them with long life in particular; for, long life, is, of it self, no Blessing at all, and short life is generally no Evil, but a deliverance from much Evil. And the short life of Children, is not so much a punishment to *them*, as to their Parents; and therefore for Children to be cut off untimely for their Disobedi- Dis III.

ence

Dif. III. ence to their Parents, were to afflict the miſerable Parents doubly; to cauſe them to looſe their Children, and to looſe them in Diſobedience.

Such puniſhment would indeed be very proper for the Parent, by whoſe want of careful, virtuous, and religious Education, the Child ſhould become rebellious and diſobedient; for then he would bear the puniſhment of his own fault, he would then ſmart for his folly or his neglect, and be afflicted firſt by a Diſobedience, and then by an immature Death, its conſequence, both which he might and ought to have prevented. But, truly, when a Parent has been very careful to educate his Children well, and yet ſhall find them diſobedient and rebellious, and love them notwithſtanding tenderly, for ſuch a Parent to looſe theſe Children, would look like a hardſhip, and none alive but would conclude the *Parent* were rather puniſh'd than the *Children*; for though old Age may be a Bleſſing, when attended with other Bleſſings, yet certainly for People to die young, can be no puniſhment to them, becauſe they feel no farther miſery, Death puts an end to all their Sufferings.

And as for the pleaſures of this Life, from which they are cut off by Death, they who live to enjoy them, know the dead

the dead have loſt nothing, for, (beſides, that it is no pain to looſe what they never had) the pleaſures of this life are, at the beſt, but juſt enough to ſweeten life, and make it tollerable; life were not worth the living without them, but they who live not, do not want them. And if it were not for the comfort and the benefit of Relations, and the doing good in the World, a ſhort life were a great bleſſing. The Inſtance that is commonly brought to prove the Heathens alſo were of the mind, that ſhort life was a puniſhment of Diſobedient Children, is that of *Simoiſius* in *Homer*, who died very young, becauſe he was Diſobedient, and would not ſupport his Parents. But this Inſtance is much miſtaken, for there *Simoiſius* is lamented as one that died exceeding young, and lived not to make the returns of good Children to their Parents, for all their care and tenderneſs beſtowed upon him. He made not returns anſwerable to his dear Parents, for he died very young, and was diſabled by Death, from doing what he would otherwiſe have done, if he had liv'd. It is a common Inſtance, and therefore I chooſe to diſprove it, becauſe the Heathens were not likely to make any ſuch judgment of the immature deaths of Diſobedient Children, any otherwiſe than Diſ. III.

Dif. III. by reckoning immature deaths among the misfortunes that befel Mankind, and a token of the Divine diſpleaſure, but, though due enough, yet no more due to *that* crime than any *other*. And therefore when St. *Paul* applies this Commandment with this Promiſe of long Life, to the Chriſtians, in *Eph.* 6. 2, & 3. he ought to be underſtood in general of *being bleſſed by God*, ſome way or other. *Honour thy Father and Mother, which is the firſt Commandment with promiſe*, i. e. the firſt Commandment of the ſecond Table, and hath a Promiſe annexed to it: Or the firſt Commandment with a ſpecial Promiſe, (for the ſecond Commandment hath a Promiſe and a Threatning too, annexed to it, in the general) *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the Earth.* His deſign is certainly to encourage Children to honour and obey their Parents, and he repeats the encouragement God gave the Children of *Iſrael*, but he could not repeat it wholly in the ſenſe they took it in, becauſe Chriſtians have nothing to do with *Canaan*; but it muſt have another ſenſe, equivalent, and that is, *that it may be well with thee*, and thou mayeſt live happily, and in Gods favour, and he may bleſs thee with the bleſſings thou ſhalt moſt ſtand in need of, and will be beſt for thee, and, if

that

that be beſt for thee, *that thou mayeſt live long on the Earth.* Diſ. III.

We cannot therefore conclude from the Promiſe annexed to this Commandment, that long life will *certainly* follow upon the Childrens obedience to their Parents, we muſt not underſtand that particular Bleſſing to be certainly and univerſally fix'd to good Children; every days experience may convince us of the contrary, for we ſee the moſt obedient, dutiful, and moſt reſpectful Children, carried off by haſty and untimely ends, and ſuch as gave the greateſt hopes imaginable. Neither yet may we conclude, that long life is not ſometimes beſtowed upon Obedient Children, for it ſometimes may be; it is not fixed, but it is not, to be ſure, excluded. Neither can we any ways conclude, that they who arrive to old Age, have therefore been Obedient Children, for that is not likely to be true, Experience is againſt it, in too many Inſtances, *there is a Sinner of an hundred years old*; and therefore from theſe uncertainties, there can be no concluding with any ſafety.

The encouragements that Children have from this Commandment, and its Promiſe, are, that if long life be moſt convenient for them, all their Caſe and Circumſtances conſidered, they may expect it;

Dif. III. but if it will not prove a Bleſſing, (as truly of it ſelf it never will) then is not God unfaithful in this promiſe, if he take to himſelf betimes, the beſt and moſt Obedient Children; for he only promis'd what would prove a Bleſſing, when he promis'd long Life; and the *righteous are* ſometimes *taken away from the Evil to come*, and then, to be ſure, in love and kindneſs, and therefore long life is not always a Bleſſing, and therefore is not always promis'd, for God deſigns to bleſs Obedient Children. He will hear the Prayers of their Parents, he will confirm their Bleſſings; he will ſometimes bleſs them by extraordinary means and methods; and oftner by ordinary, by bleſſing their Care and Labour, promoting their Induſtry, giving them favour in the ſight of ſuch as ſhall be able to do them Service; he will cauſe their dutiful and good behaviour to their Parents to ſtand them in good ſtead, and recommend them to the good opinion of others, there being indeed nothing that generally makes more acceptable to all ſorts of People, than ſuch obedient carriage. Nothing becomes the rich and noble better, nothing does ſooner recommend the poor and mean, to favour and employment, to pity and relief, than ſuch report of them, that they are good and helpful

elpful to their Parents in diſtreſs. When Diſ. III.
he Son of *Syrach* exhorteth to be help-
ul to Parents, he tells the Children, they
hall find their accounts in ſo doing. *My*
on, help thy Father in his Age, and grieve
im not as long as he liveth; and if his un-
erſtanding fail, have patience with him,
nd deſpiſe him not, when thou art in thy
ull ſtrength: For the relieving of thy Fa-
her ſhall not be forgotten, and inſtead of
ins, it ſhall be added to build thee up;
n the day of affliction it ſhall be remembred,
. 12. it will undoubtedly be remembred
or good, both by God and all good Peo-
le. God will not only bleſs Obedient
Children here, but he will bleſs them with
he bleſſings of another Country, of which
he Land of *Canaan*, with all its beauty
nd fertility, was but a poor and empty
hadow; even with the bleſſing of eternal
ife in Heaven, where our ſhort ſpan ſhall
e prolong'd to everlaſting Ages, and where
t ſhall be well for ever with Us, where it
ill be our Pleaſure, and Reward to be per-
etually loving, honouring, and obeying
ur Eternal *Parent*, the great Creator and
reſerver of us all, whom let us all beſeech,
n the words of the Church, *to have Mercy*
pon us, and to incline our Hearts to keep
his Law.

Diſcourſe IV.

Epheſians vi. Verſe 4.

And ye Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath, but bring them up in the Nurture, and Admonition of the Lord.

HAving already treated of the Duty of Children to their Parents, and conſidered ſome of the moſt proper Caſes, in that Relation; I am now to ſpeak a little to the advice that St. *Paul* here gives to Parents, how to behave themſelves towards their Children. He had ſpoken to Children, in the verſe before, *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right; Honour thy Father and Mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the Earth*; and then he applies himſelf to Parents, *And ye Fathers, &c.*

I take it for a Rule, and granted, that there is no Relation in the World, either Natural, or Civil and agreed upon, but there is a Reciprocal duty obliging each Party.

There

There is no ſuch thing as one Mans requiring Love, Reſpect, Honour, Service, or Obedience, from another, without being, at the ſame time, oblig'd to do him ſome good turn for it, or for having already done it. God is not indeed a Debtor to any Man, but the thing at the bottom is the ſame; it is for our Creation, Preſervation, for all the bleſſings of this Life, and for the promiſes and hopes of a better, that we owe him, and are call'd upon to pay him, Honour and Service, Praiſe and Thankſgiving. Without *thoſe*, he would have no right to *theſe*; we need not fear to ſay ſo. We ſhould not *praiſe* him, but for the good we have receiv'd, nor *pray* to him, but for the good we expect to receive *from* him. Now though he does not antecedently owe theſe favours and bleſſings to Mankind, yet it is neceſſary that he do them, before any Obligation can be laid on Mankind, to pay him Prayer or Praiſe, Honour, Service or Thankſgiving. There is therefore nothing more certain than this, that as all Duties and Relations are at firſt founded upon Benefits hoped for, or already receiv'd, ſo no one can require any thing, as a Duty, at anothers hands, without having oblig'd him, or intending to oblige him, by ſomething anſwerable to Dif. IV.

Diſ. IV. what he asks. And therefore though the Parental Relation, may ſeem, of all others, to be moſt at liberty, yet the truth is this, that all the Right and Claim they have to the Love, Reſpect, the Service, and Obedience of their Children, is founded on the love they ſhew them, and the good they do them, according to their Underſtanding and Ability. And therefore if Parents, out of cruelty or wantonneſs, ſhould expoſe their Newborn-Infants to the rage of wild Beaſts, or throw them into Rivers, and they ſhould afterwards eſcape by good Providence, they might account thoſe People for their Parents, if they would, and they might *pay* them, but they would not *owe* them, Love, or Honour, or Obedience: Their barbarous uſage cancell'd the bond of Nature, and left them under no other Obligation to their Parents, than to Strangers. No body can aſſign a Reaſon why theſe Parents ſhould require or expect any Duty, at theſe Childrens Hands: For as for the *being* they may be ſaid to give them, they took it away, as ſoon, and cruelly, as they could.

I only mention this, to make it very evident, that the Obligation of Children to love, honour, reſpect, and obey their Parents, is founded originally upon the

Parents

Parents love and care of *them*, and to shew that no one can require any thing from another as a Duty, to whom he does not also *owe* something, by way of Duty. This is necessarily to be premis'd, not only when we are considering the Duty of Parents to their Children, but to be kept in mind, in considering the duties of all Relations else, whether Natural or Civil; for, in all Relations, each Party is mutually, though differently oblig'd to each the other. As therefore Children are oblig'd to honour their Parents, so also are Parents oblig'd to look after, and take care of their Children. But because, in assigning several Reasons why Children are oblig'd to honour their Parents, in all the senses of that word, I found occasion to instance in most of the particular Cases, where Parents are oblig'd to shew their love to, and to perform, indeed, their Duty, to their Children, I am at liberty to consider the words of the Text only, which contain but one part of the behaviour of Parents towards their Children: And that is, *not to provoke their Children to Wrath, but to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* We are therefore to see, *in the first place*, what it is, *to provoke Children to wrath*; and in *the second*, why Parents should not do so; and *lastly*, Dis. IV.

DIV. *laſtly*, what is meant by *bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.*

Firſt what it is for Parents *to provoke their Children to wrath.* To *provoke any one to wrath*, is commonly underſtood, to irritate and ſtir them up to Anger, whether the provocation be juſt, or needleſs, whether with reaſon or without it. Now Parents are not here advis'd, never to provoke their Children, or to ſtir them up to Anger, for that may not be in their Power to prevent, and ſometimes they will unavoidably do it, whilſt they diſcharge their duty to them. It is ſaid of *Adonijah* the Son of *David, that his Father had not diſpleaſed him at any time, in ſaying, why haſt thou done ſo?* But this is no Example for other Parents, unleſs their Children ſo behave themſelves as not to need check or reproof. *Solomon* was a great deal wiſer than his Father, and he adviſes Parents never to regard the Cries, the pain, or grief of their Children, under their Puniſhments, when there was juſt occaſion, or when they were in danger of miſcarriage. When Parents ſee their Children in hazard of falling into evil Courſes, they are not to ſtand conſidering, whether what is proper to reclaim them and prevent their miſery, will grieve

or anger them, but to venture that, and do their Duty. They are to have regard to what they intend *ſhould*, and what in likelyhood will follow, and that is amendment; and not to how it will be taken at their Hands. They may herein look up to God the Father of us all, *who chaſtens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his Holyneſs.* And yet he underſtands and knows *that no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth joyous, but grievous, nevertheleſs afterwards, it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs to them that are exercis'd thereby.* The good of Children is what the Parent is to regard, and tho' the method of procuring that, may ſtir up all the dark and wrathful Spirits that the Children have, yet is it not to be declin'd on that account, the reaſonable hopes of its yielding the fruit of goodneſs and amendment afterwards to them who are exercis'd thereby, will juſtify what they do. Such a reſtraint, reproof, admonition or correction, as is in reaſon and all probability, likely and proper to procure the amendment of Children, tho' it will certainly provoke them to all the anger and impatience poſſible, is not here adviſ'd to be forborn by Parents, when they are bid *not to provoke their Children to wrath.* The Scripture, which commands ſuch Courſes, Diſ. IV.

Diſ. VI. Courſes to be taken in many places, does not, in any, adviſe them to be forborn. And therefore the juſt exerciſe of the Parental Power, is not reſtrain'd by any means, in theſe words, for fear of making the Children a little uneaſy.

But becauſe there were ſome Parents in St. *Paul's* time, as there are ſome in all times, of a moſt hard, inhumane temper, and others who think they have by Nature authority to ſay, and do, and uſe their Children, as they pleaſe, and thereupon are perfect Tyrants and Barbarians; and others who think it always, and in all caſes, abſolutely neceſſary to deal ruggedly and ſeverely with their Children; becauſe of theſe People, it neither was, nor is unneceſſary to lay ſome ſuch command or injunction in general on them, as this in the Text, *Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath*; and then, the *provoking to wrath*, ſignifies, the provoking them, by conſtant, hard, and evil uſage, to ſuch a degree of ſettled *Anger*, as will certainly end in *Hatred*.

The Parental Yoke, is naturally, of all others, the moſt light and eaſy: When God himſelf would expreſs his Love and Tenderneſs to Mankind, he can do it, no way, more feelingly, than by calling himſelf our *Father*, and letting us know, he treats

treats us, as Parents do their Children: And when we would ſet out the Care and Tenderneſs of one Man to another, to the higheſt, we can go no farther than to ſay, *he us'd him as a Father would his Son.* And indeed all Admonitions and Injunctions to Parents, to uſe their Children kindly, and with gentleneſs, ſeem to be directed to a very ſmall part of Mankind; St. *Paul* ſpake theſe words, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath*, but to a very few. And, I believe, that we, who now and then uſe them on theſe occaſions, can apply them to very few alſo; No, the bias of Nature is to the other way. But to thoſe few, to whom they are applicable, it may be fit to ſay—Parents, ſhew not your ſelves too hard, auſtere, and rigorous to your Children, and that for theſe Reaſons, (which was the ſecond thing to be conſidered) *Firſt*, becauſe it is unnatural in it ſelf, and *Secondly*, becauſe of the evil Conſequences of ſuch uſage. Dif. IV.

Firſt, becauſe it is unnatural in it ſelf. It is not doing as other *People* do, nor indeed as moſt other *Creatures* do; it looks as if you did not belong to Mankind, not to feel the ſame Affections, and to ſhew the ſame Kindneſs, that other Parents do. 'Tis manifeſt, that your Children are not as

Diſ. IV. as happy as their fellows are, they are prejudic'd by being deſcended from you, and do not partake of the common lot of kindneſs, with other Children. And what reaſon is there, that they ſhould be more miſerable, than others, if it lie in your Power to make them as eaſy? A Man is bound to be as good and kind to all the World, as he well can; and 'twere a weak thing, to think he has more authority and liberty to deal ill with his Children than with other People. For tho' a Man is allowed to do that with his Children which he may not do to Strangers, yet that is upon preſumption always, that it will tend to the Children's benefit, and for that reaſon the Laws of God and Man have left the Children to the Parents, and will not puniſh them for doing that to *them*, which would be puniſhed if done to *Strangers*; but neither of thoſe Laws allow the Parents to do any thing truly injurious to the Children; and Nature gives them no ſuch Power; ſhe only gives them power to do them all the good they can, and only allows them the liberty of hurting them, and afflicting them for a time, in order to their good. And therefore where a Parent's Conſcience tells him, that the affliction he is laying upon his Child, is neither deſign'd, nor likely to do

do him any good, it tells him he has no just authority to do it; it tells him he is unnatural. And tho' no humane Laws must, or ought indeed to, prevent or take cognizance of such Severity (unless the Common-wealth be found to suffer by it) because they would thereby be in danger of hindring Parents of exercising a just authority on reasonable and necessary occasions, over offending Children; tho' the Laws I say, must not take notice of these unnatural Severities, yet the Man cannot choose but know, that he is cruelly injurious all the while, and usurps a Power which does not naturally belong to him. Dis. IV.

A Parent therefore must take care, that he mistake not the *Silence* of God's Word, nor the liberty that Humane Laws must unavoidably leave to Parents in the management of their Children, nor his own severe and rugged temper, that he mistake not these for the Power and Authority that Nature gives him; for he may be unnatural to his Children, tho' God's Word prescribe him no Rule how far he may proceed, and tho' Humane Laws will allow what he does, and tho' his own temper incline him naturally to cruel and inhumane Courses, a Parent may be unnatural for all these; and may be punish'd by

Diſ. IV. by our Common-Parent, for ſuch unnatural and cruel uſage.

But *Secondly*, Parents are to be warn'd againſt too great and conſtant Severities, becauſe of the evil Conſequences of ſuch uſage. *Firſt*, it diſcourages them ſtrangely, and breaks their Spirits, they have no Heart to ſet about any thing, when they perceive that all they ſay, and all they do, is ill underſtood and ill taken, they have no Liſt or Courage to go on. They find it is much the ſame, whether they endeavour to pleaſe, and do their Duty, or not, they ſtill receive the ſame treatment, and meet with the like unkind ſevere uſage. And therefore when St. *Paul* is giving the ſame Councel to the *Coloſſians*, as here he does to the *Epheſians*, he ſubjoyns this as a reaſon—*Fathers provoke not your Children to Anger, leaſt they be diſcourag'd*, 3. 21. leaſt the perpetual faulting, and reproving, and correcting them, reduce them to an utter deſpair of pleaſing them, and thereupon they ſink, and become heartleſs, and faint in *Spirit*, under their Oppreſſion. *Oppreſſion will make a Wiſe Man mad*, as *Solomon* ſays; and conſtant miſery and painfulneſs of mind, will break a tender and ingenuous Heart, tho' the ſufferings of the Body be not very great.

There

Dis. IV.

There is naturally a desire in all Inferiors, to render themselves acceptable to their Superiors, and this is visible in young People most especially, with regard to their Parents; but this alacrity and vigorous desire, dies by degrees, when they perceive all their endeavours to that purpose fruitless; it is the hope of Succeeding, that is the life and spring of all Attempts, and when that fails, desire it self languishes. When young People do all they can to win the affections of their Parents, and find them still morose, and sharp, austere, untractable, and never to be mov'd, it is but natural to think, they should be tir'd, disconsolate, and faint, and give up all endeavours for the future. This is one evil Consequence of a constanty severe and rugged treatment of young People: But it seldom stops here, it produces very commonly, a slavish and a disingenuous fear of their Parents. They look upon them as their Tyrants, and dread them, as the Slaves do those that punish them; and indeed a severe and never-pleased Parent, is no better than a little Tyrant, a constant terror to his People. This puts the Children upon mean and disingenuous Shifts, to make their Peace, or to avoid his Sight; they are never easie, but at distance from him, and therefore fly

Dif. IV. him upon all occaſions. They can never pleaſe him with the truth, and therefore try to do it with lies and tricks. But this kind of fear is ſo near to *hatred*, and does ſo naturally produce it, that I need not make them *two* Conſequences of a conſtant ill uſage, for they are commonly but *one*. There is nothing more certain, than that thoſe whom we conſtantly *fear*, we ſhall very eaſily learn to *hate*. Nothing but love and kindneſs beget love; and nothing is more likely to beget hate, than to be conſtantly ill us'd, becauſe that looks ſo like the natural fruit of hatred.

It is not difficult, even for young People, to diſcern a difference betwixt a ſudden, tranſient, accidental Anger, and a continual ſetled diſpoſition to Severity; they can make allowance for fits, though they return lightly and frequently; but when Anger becomes habitual, and Parents are not provok'd, but always ready to quarrel, and upbraid, and puniſh, then it is natural for the Children to deſpair of pleaſing them, and to conclude they are the objects of their Hatred and Averſion; and this will too too naturally beget a coldneſs and neglect, mean thoughts, evil ſuſpicions, diſtruſt, diſregard to their Commands, contrivances to free themſelves from them, and ſuch averſion as will quick-

ly

ly end in downright hatred; for finding that *in* their Parents, and feeling that *from* them, which occaſions them to hate *others*, it will be ſtrange if it do not occaſion them to hate *them*. When others uſe them ill, though they endeavour to deſerve well at their hands, and take all opportunities to ſhew their anger, and diſlike of them, and never let them ſcape either blame or puniſhment, with or without reaſon, and lead them a life vexatious and afflicting, and will not be appeas'd by all that they can do, they eaſily conclude, that theſe People hate them, and have taken ſuch prejudice againſt them, as nothing can remove; and ſince this is reaſonable enough to conclude, in the caſe of any one beſides Parents, what is it that forbids Children to make ſuch a concluſion of their Parents alſo, but a Preſumption in Nature, that Parents cannot hate their Children? But this is not ſufficient, if it were true at the bottom, as I doubt it is not, for if Parents could hate their Children, they could expreſs their hatred no otherwiſe than theſe People do, and till we can know folks Hearts, we ſhall always judge of their Affections, by the expreſſions of Words and Actions, and therefore unleſs the Children are convinc'd (as they will in ſome time be, for they Dif. IV.

Diſ. IV. have reaſon and underſtanding, and know when they do amiſs, and when they are truly blamable) unleſs they are convinc'd that the ſeverities they undergoe are deſigned for their good and amendment, and have a tendency thereto, it will ſignifie nothing to tell them, that they are not hated by their Parents: For it is all one by what name you call it, or by what title you diſtinguiſh it, a conſtant rugged and auſtere uſage, and an implacable ſeverity will always go for hatred, with them who feel the burthen of it.

And though Children (by which I underſtand thoſe of years and diſcretion, but under the tutelage of their Parents) though Children, I ſay, will be the laſt, in whom this ill uſage begets hatred, yet it will ſurely enough beget it in them at laſt; and that is a fearful conſequence, of provoking Children to wrath, both to the Parents and the Children. A Man can hardly be eaſie under the known ill-will of any Relation, or one he has much to do withal; but this uneaſineſs grows up to pain and great trouble, when the Relation is very near; it is impoſſible for either Parents to hate their Children, or Children their Parents, or to think they are hated by each the other, without great grief and trouble; it ſits ſo hard upon their

their minds, that they are never quiet under it; if they are otherwiſe never ſo happy, yet the remembrance of this enmity interrupts their content, and ſpoils all; *All this availeth me nothing*, ſaith *Haman* to his Wife recounting his felicities, *whilſt I ſee* Mordechai *the* Jew *ſitting at the Gate.* It is not what we have, that makes us happy, if we think we want ſomething beſides; that which a reſtleſs Envy, and unmeaſurable Ambition ſpake by *him*, is ſpoken inwardly by Love or Grief, when near Relations quarrel with each other; all things beſides afford no ſetled Peace or Pleaſure, whilſt that great breach continues. Diſ. IV.

Even where the mind of one Party, (and that the injur'd and offended one) is ſatisfied with the reaſonableneſs and juſtice of his being at variance, and ſees the neceſſity there is of continuing his diſpleaſure, and that great miſchiefs would ariſe from a Compliance and Reconciliation (and ſuch caſes may very well happen, and that between Parents and Children) yet is not the mind at perfect quiet, for all this; the voice of Nature is louder than that of Reaſon, and ſtrict Juſtice, and beats importunately at the Heart, and there will be no laſting reſt, till all is over, and a through Reconciliation bring back each

Diſ IV. Party to their natural Affections, and place them in the ſtate they were at firſt, and always ſhould be.

This ſore and uneaſie condition the mind is in, during a ſtate of enmity, ſhould be one motive to the keeping and preſerving love and friendſhip betwixt Relations; and ſince the Hearts of Parents do ſo naturally incline to Children, and *love*, they ſay, *deſcends*, it ought to move them to the greater care, not to irritate them too far by a cruel uſage; that they put it not paſt the power of Reconciliation; for when hatred is once taken up, and begins to fix and ſcttle in Peoples minds, it is very hard to root it out again. One may ſooner be convinc'd, that our averſion to a Perſon is not ſo reaſonable and well grounded as it ſhould be, and that we carry our Reſentments too far; one may ſooner be convinc'd of this, than we can lay them down, and amend; we cannot get out of our miſtakes ſo ſoon, as we fell into them, nor ſo eaſily get free from bad practice. When we have done, and perſiſted ſome while in doing, what we are afterwards convinc'd, we had better have let alone, we are not yet at liberty; there are more things concur to keep us in a way we are once engaged in, than at firſt to bring us to it. And there-

therefore it is not good to provoke any one too far, and carry matters to extremity; it makes it so much the harder, to soften them again, and bring them to good temper, and place them where you found them, though they may see the reasons of coming back, and have a secret desire of doing so: And of all enmities and feuds, the fiercest and the most implacable are those of near Relations. Dis. IV.

These are some of the evil consequences of Parents *provoking their Children to Wrath*, that is, of using them so ill, unkindly and severely, as to make them loose all patience, and fly out into fury and disorder, to loose the bands of Duty and Submission, to become Refractory, hardned in Contumacy and Rebellion: The Experience People have themselves, and the Observations they may make from others, may furnish them with other Arguments to this purpose. I have the less care and concern to look after other Reasons, because it is very probable, that the case is rare, and seldom happens, there being in all likelihood, throughout the Christian World, *twenty* too fond and tender Parents, to *one* austere and over-rigorous one: And as many in the like proportion rather undone by softness and indulgence, than miscarry by severity. *One*

Dis. IV. *need not look for Arguments, or fear the want of them, where nature is on our side;* but becauſe St. *Paul* ſuppoſes ſome, and all Ages ſupply us with ſome Inſtances of brutal and unnatural People, after they have heard the reaſons why Parents ſhould not deal ſo over-rigorouſly with their Children, it is fit they ſhould hear what St. *Paul* adviſes, and how he would have them deal with them, and that is, *to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, which is the laſt thing to be conſidered.

To bring Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, is, according to the Letter, to bring them up in the Chriſtian Religion, to teach them their Duty, to learn them what they are to Believe, and what to Practiſe, to inſtruct them in the knowledge of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, to ſhew them in what condition they are by Nature, and to what they are advanc'd by Grace, to how much miſery their being deſcended from ſo corrupt an Original had reduc'd them, and how their actual Sins endangered them yet farther, by expoſing them to Gods Wrath, and everlaſting Death; and what deliverance from them all, was wrought by Chriſt our Lord, with all the reſt of the particulars of that moſt merciful myſterious Diſpenſation.

sation. All this is naturally comprehended under *the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*; and no doubt but Parents are here advis'd to bring their Children up in the knowledge and practice of the Christian Religion; and it is the greatest testimony of their Love that they can shew them, in so doing: The greatest Kindness they can do them, the greatest Blessing, and the best Inheritance they can bestow upon them. Without this it is a little thing to say, that neither Wisdom, Riches, Honours, nor any thing besides can make them happy, for without this, they will with all the rest, be miserable. Dis. IV.

Taking therefore the *bringing Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, for the breeding them up in the knowledge of Christ and his Religion, the connexion may be this. Would you, Parents, have your Children honour you, and behave themselves obediently, and as becomes them in all respects, bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, teach them the Christian Law, let them read and be conversant in the Holy Scriptures, make them apply themselves early to that, there they will see their Duty, there they will find such lessons of Instruction, such great encouragements and promises of huge rewards, as will secure their

Diſ IV. their Honour and Reſpect, their Service and Obedience to their Parents; a better ſenſe cannot be found to fit theſe words; but becauſe *the Nurture and the Admonition of the Lord* ſeems to be ſet in oppoſition, to *the provoking to Wrath*, and becauſe the words will better bear it, and that a good Religious Education in the Chriſtian Doctrine does not ſufficiently anſwer to *provoking Children to Wrath*, it may be ſomewhat more pertinent and proper, to underſtand by *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, ſuch a Religious Admonition, and Reproof, and Caſtigation of Children, as is agreeable to the Doctrine, and good Spirit of Chriſt the Lord; becauſe this ſenſe will alſo take in the other, and make the oppoſition perfect. Would you who are Parents, be honour'd and obeyed by your Children? Take the courſes that are propereſt for that purpoſe; do not think of bringing your deſigns to paſs, by being hard, moroſe, and always out of humour with them; by treating them inhumanly and cruelly, by diſcouraging them continually with frowns and ill looks, with tauntings and upbraidings, with threats, and cruel chaſtiſements; they will not need ſo great ſeverities; ſuch ſlaviſh uſage, ſuch daily menaces of diſinheriting and caſting off, and ſuch like rugged and illiberal

ral treatment as is ſometimes ſhewn them, Diſ. IV.
theſe things do often but inflame them, and exaſperate them to greater contumacy, extinguiſh by degrees their natural Piety and Affections, make them avoid your ſight, fly from you, as from miſchief; to dread you like an Executioner, ſhake off the yoak, as ſoon as poſſibly they can, and if not hate, yet never love you more. They will be won with better Arguments than theſe, you may ſecure their Honour and Obedience better, by more natural and gentle methods; give them ſuch good Inſtructions as you find in Holy Scriptures; Remember them of Gods Commands, to Honour and Obey their Parents; admoniſh them, from thence, with the Spirit of Meekneſs, to take good heed to their Ways, how they tranſgreſs the Laws of God by diſobeying *their* Commands when juſt and reaſonable, and how they ſhall one day, be put to anſwer for the neglectful or contemptuous breach of them.

Lay but, at firſt, this good Religious foundation in their minds, and you may build upon it for ever after; it will hold when all things elſe fail, and it will forward all conſiderations beſides, it will give ſtrength to every Argument; this will be the readieſt way to convince young People you deſign their good in all Injunctions

Diſ. IV. ons and Commands, they will ſee that their Parents urge no more than God Commands, and have no other intereſt to purſue than *their* Happineſs. The Reception of any Argument, the power that either advice or command ſhall obtain, depends, in a great meaſure, upon the way and manner of propounding it; if you have once convinc'd the Party, that you deſign his benefit, you have already gain'd a favourable attention, and every thing you ſay, ſhall be conſidered; but if you give him cauſe to ſuſpect your kindneſs, he will neglect, or coldly entertain, all you ſhall offer. When young ones are convinc'd of the true love and kindneſs of their Parents (and it is very eaſie to convince them, by gentle uſage) they will bear with decency and patience, a great many hard uneaſie things; Reproof, and Admonition, nay, and Puniſhments, will find Submiſſion, and Obedience, when they can come to think, it is in order to their good, or at leaſt deſign'd for that purpoſe. It is not to be thought, that any manner of Reſtraint, or Puniſhment, ſhould be for the preſent eaſie, or well taken; a Parent is not to look for this, nor to have any great regard to it; but he is ſo to order them, that upon Conſideration and Reflexion, they may find, that all was well

inten-

intended towards them, that all their Admonitions and Reproofs, Reſtraints and Puniſhments, were natural and moderate, ſuch as were proper for their Age, Condition, and Offence, ſuch as were likely to effect amendment, and prevent or cure an evil; ſuch as other Parents wiſe and tender might make uſe of, on the like occaſions; ſuch as Religion would adviſe and juſtifie. Such Nurture and Admonition, ſuch Inſtruction and Reproof, and Chaſtiſement as this, would look as if it came from the Lord, who never grieves us willingly, or for his pleaſure, but for neceſſity, for our amendment, and our laſting good; and ſuch as this, would ſecure the Honour and Reſpect, the Service and Obedience of Children to their Parents. Diſ. IV.

I have, before, obſerv'd, that when we diſcourſe of this matter, we ſpeak but to a few, who are nearly concern'd; ſmall is the number of cruel and unnatural Parents, and therefore few are the Children who ſuffer at their hands; and therefore it will not be reaſonable that many ſhould apply what has been ſaid, too cloſely to themſelves, or think it their own caſe, whether Parents or Children: The Children are not to think the Parents cruel or unnatural, becauſe they have been conſtantly reprov'd for their evil words or practice,

Diſ. IV. practice, and cloſely reſtrain'd from doing any thing hurtful to themſelves or others, or ſharpely puniſh'd for having done it; for theſe are, all of them Duties to Parents, and cannot therefore be their faults: And beſides it may very well happen, that Parents may be angry ſoon, and retain it long, with great Reaſon and Juſtice, when the Children think otherwiſe, becauſe *they* underſtand things better, ſee the natural tendency of many of their Actions and Humours, and the conſequences they may draw after them, and the hazards, and ſinful courſes they may engage them in; and a world of things beſides, which ignorance, and thoughtleſſneſs, and inexperience, keep the Children from conſidering. And they are too much concern'd in their own behalf, to paſs a true impartial judgment on the ſeverities they undergoe: Too apt to juſtifie their own Conduct, and to conclude themſelves if not entirely innocent, yet not deſerving ſuch reproof or puniſhment. And, after all that can be ſaid, it were much better for the World, and more reaſonable, all things conſidered, that more Children ſhould ſuffer from the rigours of their Parents, than do, (or ever will do) than that Parents out of fear of offending on this ſide, ſhould be reſtrain'd from uſing ſuch ſeverities,

as

as they (who know their Childrens Humours and Inclinations beſt) ſhall think convenient, and moſt proper; or that Children ſhould diſpute, conteſt and quarrel their right, or ſhould withdraw themſelves from their Obedience, upon any ſuch pretence: Of the two evils, this, beyond Compariſon, would be the greater; and therefore, however hard and heavy the dominion of ſome Parents may be, I know no remedy or way to eaſe the Children, whilſt they continue under them, but a ſubmiſſive, meek, and dutiful Deportment towards them; patience, and quiet undergoing what is laid upon them, will ſooneſt bring the Parents to Conſideration and Reaſon, and mollifie and break their fury, and ſometimes their Hearts; when a perverſe and contumacious obſtinacy will but exaſperate to greater anger and ſeverity: And time at length will either vanquiſh their Auſterity, or ſet the Children at their liberty, ſo that they have not long, or much to ſuffer. And therefore tho' the Text is, *Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath*; Yet I will make an end with the Command foregoing, *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.* Diſ. IV.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe V.

Timothy v. Verſe 8.

But if any provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.

AMongſt other Duties incumbent upon Parents, that of making Proviſion for their temporal Livelihood, is certainly one; and here commended and injoyned by St. *Paul*, in words of great weight and moment. *If any provide not*, &c. In ſpeaking to which, I intend to conſider, in the *firſt place*, the terms here us'd; and *in the ſecond*, ſay ſomething to the different proportions of Proviſion for Children, becauſe *to provide*, is an indefinite Phraſe, and muſt be determin'd by ſeveral Conſiderations and Reſpects; and *thirdly*, conſider the caſe of diſinheriting Children, for whom Parents are ſo oblig'd to make Proviſion; as far as it relates to us, and becomes a caſe of Conſcience.

Dif. V. *First*, Of the terms here us'd: *To provide*, is to take care of, and make Provision for the maintenance, the livelihood, and subsistence, proper to the age, condition and quality of any one. To provide *for our own*, is to provide for such as have any relation to, and dependance on us, such as are more ours, than any others; and *to provide especially for those of our own House*, is to provide for our Kindred and Family, and those who are nearly related to us, and, in this particular place, especially our Children. *To deny the Faith*, was accounted the greatest Sin, a Christian could commit; *Apostacy* was thought to be much more heinous than *Infidelity*; as a *Renegade* is much more odious than an open Adversary, made so by accident, and not by choice; and therefore *to deny the Faith*, is a Phrase of great exaggeration, and signifies the being as bad a Man, and the doing as bad things as possibly he can, though he do not actually *deny the Faith*, nor become truly *an Infidel*. For 'tis certain that a Parent may be very negligent and careless of, and very cruel to his Children, without renouncing to his belief of the Christian Doctrine, the meaning therefore of *denying the Faith*, is the acting in contradiction to it, the neglecting or despising its Commands.

They

Dis. V.

They who profeſs themſelves *Chriſtians*, own and acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt to be their King and Lawgiver, they have given up their names to him in Baptiſm, they are to do as he injoyns them, they are to guide and govern themſelves by his Directions, to do whatever he commands, and to leave undone, whatever he forbids; this, all Chriſtians are oblig'd to, by vertue of their Baptiſm, and they profeſs themſelves oblig'd to do it, by owning themſelves to be Chriſtians: And therefore when they practiſe in oppoſition *to this Faith*, they are ſaid *to deny it*, and to become Infidels, although they do not formally and ſolemnly deny their Chriſtianity. It is as St. *Paul* expreſſes, Tit. 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate*, or void of Judgment; and the doing thus, is therefore ſaid to be *worſe than being Infidel*, and doing the like, becauſe the Unbelievers have not the ſame light, knowledge, and underſtanding of theſe Duties that Chriſtians have, nor is the performance of them, injoyn'd, under ſo great and weighty penalties, nor with ſo great encouragements to Infidels, as to the Chriſtians in the Goſpel.

Diſ. V. The meaning therefore of the words of the Text, as applied to Parents in particular, is this; if any Parent, who profeſſes and calls himſelf a Chriſtian, neglects or refuſes to make a due and fitting proviſion for his own Children, according to his Underſtanding and Abilities, he is really a bad Man, he does in effect deny the Faith, he lets it have no power over him, he withdraws himſelf from the Obedience he owes, and ought to pay, to Chriſt's Commands, which enjoyn all Parents to provide for their Children, and he is ſo much worſe than an Infidel, by how much he is more obliged to make ſuch proviſion for his Children, than Unbelievers are, who have not the ſame Commands and Laws, the ſame Encouragements, nor are tied by the ſame Penalties that Chriſtians are.

From the terms of the Text thus explain'd, it may not be amiſs, before I go on to the other Heads, to obſerve theſe two things; *Firſt*, that the Faith of Chriſt does always include Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt. *Secondly*, that all natural Duties are tied moſt ſtrongly upon Chriſtians, by the Faith of Chriſt, *i. e.* by their profeſſing Chriſtianity. *Firſt*, that *the Faith of Chriſt* does certainly include Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt: For if People are ſaid *to deny the Faith*, by acting in oppoſition

sition to it, by not performing its Injunctions and Commands, and *to keep*, and *hold fast the Faith* by living up to its Rules, and conforming to its Precepts, it is plain, that barely believing the Gospel, is not the Faith, that will stand us in any stead, of it self; and yet 'tis certain, that disowning externally the belief and profession of Christianity, is, *denying the Faith*, though Men should live in the Practice and Obedience of most of Christs Commands. It was not only possible, but practis'd often, in the primitive Ages of Christianity, for Men to deny themselves to be Christians in publick, and before the Magistrates, to save themselves from Starving, Banishment, or Prisons, or Death with Torments, yet underhand both thought themselves to be Christians, and liv'd as Christians: But this was a huge mistake, and guarded frequently against, by our Saviour himself, who tells his Disciples that *they who denied him before Men*, (whatever they might think of themselves, and know, of their adherence to his Laws, in Heart and Practice) *should be denied by him before his Father in Heaven with all his holy Angels*, and gives them in charge to confess him openly when they were call'd upon to do it; and St. *Paul* assures us, that *with the Mouth, Confession* (that Dis. V.

Diſ. V. Jeſus is the Son of God) *is made unto Salvation.* Now it matter'd not, what theſe People thought with themſelves, nor how innocently and virtuouſly they might otherwiſe live, they did, by this verbally diſowning themſelves Chriſtians, and diſclaiming that Profeſſion, they did, to all intents and purpoſes, *deny the Faith*, and renounce to Chriſtianity. The ſcandal and offence they gave to the Chriſtians was exceeding great, and miſchievious; the ſcorn, and triumph, they afforded to the Jews and Heathens, the impediments and ſtops they put in the way of Converts, and doubting People, were all great, and occaſion'd as much miſchief and diſhonour to the Chriſtian Name, as if they had at the ſame time renounced to all their virtuous and religious Practice. And ſince whoever embrac'd Chriſtianity, engaged to prefer the being *call'd a Chriſtian*, and the profeſſing that belief, to all the good or evil this World could afford, to all the profit, pleaſure and advantage he might any ways reap, and to all the pain and miſery he might any ways undergoe, ſince the undertaking Chriſtianity implies all this, ſince this is truly *the Doctrine of the Croſs*, that all Chriſtians make profeſſion of in Baptiſm; 'tis evident, that he who, to ſave himſelf from either ſhame or pain, denies himſelf,

himself, in word, to be a Christian, *de-* Dis. V.
nies the Faith, and renounces to Christia-
nity in a most large important Article, and shall have no advantage from Christ's promises, although he live a good and virtuous life in other respects. Now though this alone, and of it self, is more than enough to hazard a Mans Salvation, yet is not the bare profession of Christianity, no nor the belief of all its Articles, enough to secure a Man from denying the Faith; because it is evident he may deny it in works, though he believe in his Heart, and confess with his Mouth, that Jesus is the Son of God; and the reason of that is this, that every Christian is oblig'd, by virtue of his profession, not only to believe with the Heart, and make confession with the Mouth of the Faith of Christ, but to evidence this Faith in all his Actions, to shew it in his Life and Conversation; and that all these things are absolutely necessary, and altogether make the Faith of a good Christian; and therefore that neither the one, nor the other (but all together) will serve a Man's turn, or stand him in any stead. In a word, if a Man can be properly said to *deny the Faith*, by neglecting or refusing to do his Duty, 'tis evident that Faith includes Obedience to the Laws of Christ, and is, without those works, both vain and dead. The

Dis. V. The *second* thing to be obſerv'd, is this; that all our Natural and our Civil Duties are ſtrongly tied upon us, by virtue of our profeſſion of Chriſtianity. It is very much to the honour of our Religion, that it is wholy taken up in providing for the ſecurity and benefit of Mankind, even in this World; its general bent and tendency is to ſet Men at eaſe, and make them happy; its great endeavour is to ſecure the Duties of all Relations to each the other, from want of which proceed all the miſchiefs in the World. It does not leave Men to be mov'd by ſuch conſiderations alone as Natural Reaſon will ſuggeſt, but furniſhes them with better, and lays the powerful Commands of God upon them, with the Sanction of great and fearful Penalties to ſuch as diſobey, and with the great encouragements of endleſs Happineſs to Men's Obedience. Now nothing can be more to the advantage of any Man, than that all the People with whom he has to deal, to whom he has any Relation, or upon whom he has any dependance, ſhould be commanded by God above, to ſhew him Mercy; and to do him Juſtice; to do him all good Offices; and to ſuffer none to do him Injury; and ſhould be encourag'd to all this, by promiſes of the greateſt Bleſſings, and threatned, upon neglect, with

with the moſt fearful and amazing Evils; Diſ. V.
nothing is more likely to ſecure a Man's Peace and Happineſs, than ſuch a fence as this; and yet this is the fence that Chriſtianity provides for every ſingle Perſon in the World, by laying its commands, extending its promiſes and threats to every ſingle Chriſtian, to oblige them to perform their ſeveral Duties to their ſeveral Relations throughout the World. This ought to recommend the Chriſtian Religion to all conſidering People, above all other Laws and Diſpenſations whatſoever; for though indeed it muſt be own'd, that natural and civil Duties fare no better, or at leaſt not very much, under Chriſtianity, notwithſtanding all this care, than under *Judaiſm*, or *Mahumetiſm*, or *Pagamiſm*, yet this is not for want of any thing in Chriſtianity, but of good ſenſe and conſideration in Mankind; the Religion is not any where defective, but its Profeſſors; that is ſtill excellent and moſt divine, but we are ſottiſh, wicked, and worſe than Infidels. It will, one day, be more tollerable for Heathens, Jews, and Turks, than unbelieving diſobedient Chriſtians. There is no Religion in the World, was ever framed to make Men happy even in this life, like that of Jeſus Chriſt, if it were thoroughly purſued: A Man cannot

Diſ. V. cannot poſſibly be made uneaſie, or miſerable, or ſuffer any evil at anothers hands, without the violation of ſome Chriſtian Command, which, if obeyed, would have ſecur'd him.

Having therefore premis'd theſe things, which ſhew ſufficiently, the great Obligation Chriſtian Parents lie under, to make Proviſion for their Children, it is time to come to be more particular, and to ſee what ſort of Proviſion they *are* to make, which was the *ſecond* thing to be conſidered.

To determine with any manner of exactneſs, or to any uſe and purpoſe, the proportion of Proviſion Parents are to make for Children, it will be neceſſary to have conſideration and reſpect to their Age, Condition, and Capacity. Reſpect muſt needs be had to their *Age*, becauſe there is a time when Children are ſo helpleſs, that all they want and can enjoy, muſt be provided for them, and it can lie on no body ſo well as Parents to do it; and in this caſe, *Proviſion*, includes every thing that Children ſtand in need of, this nature teaches, and I need not farther inſiſt on it. As they grow up in years, their Quality and Condition, their Capacity and Abilities both of Body and Mind, are to come into conſideration, and they muſt be

be more and more inur'd to Labour, Di- Dif. V.
ligence, and Induſtry. It is not to be thought, that Parents are oblig'd only to provide for their Children, Money, Lands, and Houſes, and then have done their Duty; but they muſt provide them, with abilities of Body and Mind, both to obtain, preſerve, and uſe, the benefits they intend to beſtow upon them; they muſt accuſtom them, whilſt young, to application and attention to Buſineſs; theſe things are neceſſary both to Poor and Rich, and without them, the Poor will never be rich, and the Rich will be quickly poor. It is certain, that the Poor can never diſcharge the Duty of Parents well to their Children, without inuring them to labour and hardſhip, that is the Proviſion they are only capable of making for them, and *that* they are oblig'd to make; *God* gives their Children Health and Strength, and *they* muſt ſee them well employed and us'd; *that* is the portion God enables them to give them, and the ſooner they begin with them, and the cloſer they purſue them, to Labour, Diligence, and Induſtry, the kinder they will be to them, the better they will provide for them. 'Tis certain that the pooreſt Parents in the World, are oblig'd to provide for their Children, according to the beſt of their Abilities,

and

Dis. V. and as certain, that they can provide for them no otherwise, than by accustoming them to Labour, and Industry, and therefore 'tis certain, that they are oblig'd to provide thus for them.

It looks, at first, like doing them no harm, to let them continue lazy, idle, and doing nothing; and many poor People are extremely guilty of this way of Education, imagining it a piece of kindness to their Children, to let them rather beg their Bread, than put them to labour for it; a Mistake not only mischievous to the Commonwealth, but of most pernicious consequence to their Children, the unkindest thing that they can do to them; for though it please them for the present, yet it entails on them perpetual misery, and very often untimely Death, by engaging them in wicked courses, the sure and ready road to ruine; whereas the bringing them up to labour and continual business of some kind or other, keeps them, at least, in a mean sufficiency, if not in plenty, and puts them into a capacity of emerging out of their difficulties, and bettering their condition. So that I do not see, but that Poor People do really offend God, as well as injure their Children, by keeping them idle, by not inuring them most constantly to such labours as God enables

enables them to bear. We know that God ties them to do what they can for their Children, and they are capable of doing nothing but this for them, and therefore God hath tied them to this; and if they will not do this for their Children, St. *Paul* will tell them, *they deny the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.* Dif. V.

As for the richer and the better ſort of People, their quality and condition is alſo to be conſidered, in determining what kind of Proviſion is to be made for their Children. Cuſtom and the Uſages of the Country, make many things decent and fit, which otherwiſe would be indifferent; and diſtinction of quality and condition is abſolutely neceſſary to the keeping up Quiet and Order in the World; it is impoſſible for Mankind to live in peace, without a due Subordination of one condition to another; and therefore though theſe things, conſidered by themſelves, appear neither Moral nor Religious, but matters of Ceremony, Decency and Form, yet whoſo ſets himſelf to conſider things throughly, will find, that theſe things in conjunction one with another, are ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the ſecuring peace and order, that without them, neither Religion nor Morality could live and flouriſh in the World; and therefore they who

Diſc. V. think meanly of theſe things, and that Mankind is above them, are, it may be, miſtaken in Mankind, and underſtand not Humane Nature enough; and they who endeavour to ſubvert and overturn them, are not aware of the evils that would enſue. It can't be told, in what rank of Virtues, Decency, and Honour, and diſtinction of Quality and Condition ſtand; but yet it is eaſie to ſee, that without theſe things, there would be nothing but confuſion and diſorder in the World. It is therefore poſſible for one Man to do that, by reaſon of his quality and condition, with reaſon and innocence, which another cannot do, by reaſon of *his* condition, without offence and blame. 'Tis poſſible for a Man of good quality to make ſuch proviſion for his Children, as may be truly faulty, which if a meaner Man had made, he had done well and laudably. And therefore till Men find a better Rule to walk by, in theſe caſes, than Decency and Cuſtom and good Fame, they will not do either well or wiſely to neglect and overlook them, though I can't aſſign them the particular Command of God which they offend againſt in ſuch neglect.

Upon theſe accounts, it may be utterly impoſſible for any one elſe, to preſcribe to a Parent, a Rule of Proviſion for his Children,

dren, either as to kind, or quantity; but it will not be difficult for him himſelf to do it, taking theſe things into conſideration. Only let him not be unmindful of theſe two things. *Firſt*, that he never educate his Children, above the Proviſion he deſigns to make for them; and, *Secondly*, that whatever Proviſion he deſigns to make for them, he inure them to Labour, Diligence and Induſtry, to Attention, and Application, as they are capable of bearing; this is common to all qualities and conditions, this muſt go along with all Children, the pooreſt are not too mean for theſe qualities, nor the richeſt above them. Diſ. V.

Firſt, a Parent is to take good heed that he never educate his Children, above the Proviſion he deſigns to make for them; as well becauſe it will ſlacken their Diligence and Induſtry, upon preſumption there will not be ſo great occaſion for them, as alſo that the diſappointment will be great and troubleſome, without any manner of advantage; it being much more eaſy to bear with a mean condition conſtantly, than to fall into it, from a plentiful and good one; which is the caſe of People better educated than provided for; the ſoft and tender uſage of People, whilſt young, and capable of undergoing labour

Diſ. V. labour and more hardſhip, is truly a diſkindneſs to them, without an anſwerable Proviſion for them afterwards; for whenever they are left to ſhift for themſelves, they are no better than expos'd; naked, as it were, and defenceleſs, unable to procure themſelves a livelyhood, and in much worſe condition than their inferiours. This is the misfortune frequently, of being born of an ancient and gentile Family, or of Parents preſum'd to be much richer than they truly are; their Name and Quality and Reputation, entail upon them miſery and want; they muſt be bred as if they were all to inherit great Eſtates, when they are to inherit nothing but a Name, that does them miſchief: This is not deſign'd a kindneſs to the Children, but generally proceeds from Pride and Vanity, which make the Children mean and miſerable *indeed*, for fear the Parents ſhould be *thought* ſo. 'Tis one of the unkindeſt things a Parent can do to breed his Children up in delicacy, and ſoftneſs whilſt they are young and ſtrong, and then to leave them to themſelves; to work their fortune out of weakneſs and folly; 'tis very ill for the richeſt Parents that are, to deal too tenderly with their Children, let them leave them as well-provided as they can; but 'tis great cruelty in Parents

that

that are able to leave them little or no- Dif. V.
thing; to leave them pride and lazineſs, and an incapacity both of body and mind, to do themſelves any ſervice; as if the reproach and blame that muſt unavoidably fall on theſe unkind Parents were not more to be reſpected and feared, than the reputation of having a ſmall Eſtate, and being unable to leave them a conſiderable Fortune. This is apparently preferring their own *Fame* to the true and laſting *benefit* of their Children, in a material point, which is a very ill way of providing for them.

And theſe People, of appearing faſhion and quality, (though to be pittied more) are as much to be blamed, as the poorer ſort, who will not inure their Children to labour and cloſe application; for their inability to provide for them, according to their quality and condition, will not excuſe them for neglecting to do *as* they are able; the effects of this unadvis'd way of education are ſo remarkably bad, that 'tis a wonder Men ſhould need any caution againſt it; the Men-children either fall into the meanneſs of Servitude, the refuge of the idle and uninſtructed part of Mankind, or betake themſelves in deſpair to the Wars abroad, or to Robberies at home; the Women fall too often into the hands

Dis. V. of wicked Tempters, through want of ability to employ themselves in honest courses, and an utter incapacity of maintaining their condition; their Poverty making them unfit for their *Equals*, and their soft expensive Education making their *Inferiours* afraid to match with them, besides the hazard of bringing *the Spirit of a good Family*, along with them.

These are some of the usual mischiefs of a Parents educating his Children much above the Provision he is able, or willing, to make for them, and leave them; sufficient to discourage any one from doing it, considering how much easier 'tis, to advance and rise above our hopes, than to fall from our expectations; and how much kinder it is, to leave our Children satisfaction and content, if not surprize and pleasure, than grief and shame upon their Disappointment.

There is also the opposite extream that is not to be forgotten, and that is, a mean and sordid Education, when they design to leave, or cannot help the leaving, them a great Fortune. I am not directly to charge this humour with a Sin, but 'tis a huge indecency, and piece of indiscretion, a thing that has often had very ill consequences, and cannot easily have good; for the young People, either seeing good

reason

reaſon to hope, or finding for certain, that they ſhall one day ſucceed to a Fortune ſuperior to the condition they are educated in, do either begin to deſpiſe, or to neglect, their buſineſs; they think themſelves above their Calling, or imagine they ſhall ſtand in little need of its aſſiſtance, and, upon either account, ſlacken their care and induſtry, withdraw their minds from their proper concerns, and become very quickly bad Servants; and as ſoon as they come to Liberty and their Eſtate, fall into all extravagance, and make a very ill uſe of both. In a word, a mean and ſordid Education, with the proſpect of a plentiful condition to follow, will hardly eſcape one of theſe two extreams, either by uſe contract a mean and ſordid Spirit, and in the midſt of plenty live a wretched and penurious life, ſo that a mean Eſtate had been ſufficient and moſt proper; or elſe there will ſo much time be loſt in the way they are in, and they will ſhake off their condition, and betake themſelves to looſe and profuſe courſes, and be undone by too great plenty. Diſ. V.

A prudent Parent will therefore carefully avoid both theſe extreams, of educating his Children much *above* or much *below* the Proviſion he deſigns to make for them, and that this may not ſeem to be

Diſ. V. out of the way, it is, if well conſidered, the ſureſt means of rendring the Proviſion they make, moſt ſerviceable and uſeful to their Children: For by theſe means, the Children have encouragement to proſecute their buſineſs with Induſtry and Application, knowing their Parents will take care to farther them, and help them according to their beginnings, and that ſuch help and aſſiſtance of it ſelf will not ſuffice without their own great care and induſtry, which will alſo be a ſpur on that ſide. They muſt not be wanting to themſelves, no more than their Parents will be, and then their affairs are likely to ſucceed: For if they either perceive their Parents unable to go through, as they begun, they are diſcourag'd, griev'd and ſham'd, and thereupon grow deſperately careleſs; or able to do above what their preſent condition requires, they grow, as was before obſerv'd, intolerably negligent, weary of their way, and longing after liberty, which being unſeaſonably obtain'd, is commonly us'd intemperately.

This is therefore one thing that Parents will obſerve in making Proviſion for their Children, to fit them with an education ſuitable to it, to keep a mean, without either over or under-doing the matter; for ſince they are oblig'd in duty to make Proviſion

viſion for them, they ought in reaſon and prudence to take all care they can to render ſuch Proviſion the moſt ſerviceable and uſeful to them. Diſ. V.

The other thing a Parent ſhould not be unmindful of, is this, that whatever great Proviſion he intends to make for his Children, he do by all means inure them to diligence and induſtry, to application and attention of mind: Theſe qualities may chance to make ſome amends for the defect of Money or Eſtate, but no Proviſion will ſufficiently ſupply the defect of *them*! Many emerge, by theſe, out of great difficulties and ſtraits, and make their way to plenty and proſperity; and many more, for want of theſe, decline from plenty to much miſery: So that no fortune is above, or can continue, well without them; there can be no better reaſon aſſigned, why ſo many People of faſhion, are diſtinguiſh'd as much by their Vices, as their Birth and Quality, from their Inferiours, than that they are ſo ſoftly educated, and fall into the worſt of hands, *i. e.* their own, ſo ſoon: There is a great deal of care, and time, and money, oft expended on them, but it does not ſucceed ſo well with them, becauſe they muſt not be preſs'd to any thing, they muſt take what they will, and never be conſtrain'd to any thing

Dif. V. laborious and difficult. A close attention and application would break their Spirits quickly, and they would never love their business again; this is the opinion of fond and ignorant People together, and quickly agreed to by the young ones, who are always afraid of being overcharged, as well as their Parents, and think their Hearts will break a great deal sooner than they will: a miscarriage of this kind does seldom or never happen, if things were well inquir'd into; the miscarriages are generally for want of this attention, and close application. These sort of People will unavoidably have liberty enough, betimes, and therefore may well bear with restraint and labour before-hand, for a season; and if they are not taught how to employ their time in something fit and worthy of them, whilst they are young, they will never know how to do it, when they grow up, and are wholly Masters of it; so that the Parents who are only careful to provide Estates for their Children, do truly forget half of their business, which is, to fit their Children for their Estates.

Now since it is not either fit, or decent, or at least not customary, to put these People of quality, to Trades or setled Callings, it must needs be worse with them,

them, than their inferiors, if they have not ſomething equivalent to ſuch employments, to quicken their Induſtry and Diligence, to keep them buſied and amus'd as profitably as they can, to inure them to the labours of the mind, and fit them for ſervices that may, in time, be proper for them. Diſ. V.

There is no body, but is born and oblig'd to ſerve his Country in ſome capacity or other, and they who are moſt at liberty from their natural and domeſtick neceſſities, whoſe bodies are not tied to labour and earn the ſuſtenance of a Family, and to provide for their Relations, by following ſome Vocation or Employment, are moſt oblig'd to give their ſervice to their Country, becauſe they have moſt leiſure, and fewer avocations; and this the moſt profuſe and negligent, the moſt voluptuous, idle and unſerviceable Creatures of quality that are, know not how to deny: They are always ready to own their Obligation to ſerve their Country, in Offices of Honour and Advantage; but then 'tis certain, that they ought to be fit and qualified to diſcharge thoſe Duties to the Publick; which they can never be, unleſs they are bred up whilſt young, in a moſt diligent induſtrious perſuit of ſuch attainments as will qualifie them for ſuch noble Services. If

Dis. V. If Parents were as much oblig'd to seek their Childrens mischief, as they are to provide well for them, and were to study long for it, they could not find a more effectual way of doing it, than by breeding them up in idleness and softness, leaving them to themselves, and to their natural listlessness, neither charging their Memory, nor quickning their Invention, nor trying their Judgment, nor putting them to any Strait or Difficulty: They would, without any farther trouble be undone; for, under all these prejudices, the Soul will still be active, and not being under any good direction, will be active to mischief; the natural inclinations will unquestionably sway, for there is neither Reason nor Employments to hinder them, which are the only things we have to oppose to the importunity of temptations. *How can I do this thing, and sin against God?* is an argument of great Religion; but to be well employed, and full of honest business, is a much greater security, in as much as it is better to be deaf, than parly with the Devil, when he is laying Snares, and trying to corrupt us. By doing nothing, you shall quickly learn to do evil; it is the stair below it, and you cannot miss of stepping on it. The senses are awake to every thing that calls, ready

dy to entertain all evil motions and ſug- Diſ. V.
geſtions, comply with all deſires, and in a
word, to fall into all the ſnares that are
laid for them.

Now though theſe matters do not look, at firſt, as if they any ways, belong'd to making due Proviſion for Children, yet experience will quickly ſhew, that all Proviſion elſe, without this care, will either be to none, or to little purpoſe; a great Fortune will only prove a great temptation to folly and extravagance, unleſs the mind be fitted to it, and prepar'd to uſe it well and wiſely; it will only ſerve to expoſe them to the greater ſcorn and contempt, and ſhew their weakneſs more conſpicuouſly; ſo that the kindneſs Parents are ſo forward to expreſs in amaſſing great Eſtates and Fortunes for their Children, will not be ſo truly beneficial to them as they deſign it, unleſs they alſo take more care about their Education, by inuring them to Diligence and Induſtry, by accuſtoming them to cloſe application and attention to whatever they are about, tho' mean and inconſiderable; for by theſe means they will contract good habits, and be fitted for buſineſs of greater moment, when it comes upon them; and fitted to repair the breaches chance may make in their Eſtates. And that muſt certainly be

the

Diſ. V. the beſt Proviſion for Children, which will ſtand them in beſt ſtead in all conditions, which will help them to raiſe themſelves from meanneſs to ſufficiency, or plenty, and help them to improve a good one to better, and help them to prevent a fall, or to bear it well, and to recover it again. This is the benefit of a good Education, being accuſtomed to pains and labour both of body and mind whilſt young and pliable and ſuſceptible of impreſſions; and therefore this ſhould be provided for eſpecially, and in the firſt place; this is to be the bottom and foundation, and upon this we may build whatever good we will, for it will bear it; and without it all the reſt will fall to nothing.

I ſhould come in the next place, to conſider how this Duty of Parents to provide for their Children comes to be ſo frequently diſpens'd withal, by diſinheriting of Sons, and depriving Daughters of their Fortunes; how theſe proceedings are reconcileable with Reaſon, Nature, and good Conſcience, and the Laws of our Religion; but this will deſerve to be conſidered apart, and by it ſelf.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe VI.

1 Timothy v. Verſe 8.

But if any one provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.

HAving ſhewn already, from theſe words, the obligation Parents lie under, to make proviſion of things temporal for the livelyhood and ſubſiſtence of their Children, according to their ſeveral Ages, Quality, and Capacities, and laid down ſome directions withal, how to make ſuch Proviſion more ſerviceable and uſeful to them, by a prudent education of them; and ſhewn alſo, how Chriſtians neglecting ſo to do, are ſaid *to deny the Faith*, by not fulfilling, but acting in oppoſition to, the Commands of Chriſt, which enjoyn all Parents to make a due and fitting Proviſion for their Children, and become thereby *worſe than Infidels*, i. e. than ſuch as believe not the Goſpel of Chriſt, and conſequently have no other motives

Diſ. VI. motives to the diſcharging the Duty they owe their Children, than what bare reaſon, and natural affection, and the civil Laws of their Country ſuggeſt and offer; whereas the Chriſtians have moreover, the poſitive Commands of God, the common Parent of us all, the great encouragement of promiſes of endleſs and ineſtimable recompences, and the threatnings of everlaſting Death to the neglect, or the contempt of Gods Commandments, to ſtir them to Obedience. I am now to ſhew, how this Duty of Parents to provide for their Children, comes to be ſo frequently diſpens'd withal, by the diſinheriting of Sons, and denying or depriving Daughters of their Fortunes; how theſe proceedings are reconcileable, with Reaſon, Nature, and good Conſcience, and the Laws of our Religion, and then to make an end of this Subject.

That Children ſhould ſucceed to their Parents, and inherit their Eſtates and Goods, is agreed on all hands, by all Nations that were ever civiliz'd, and govern'd by Laws; and the reaſon is, that no one hath a *better* right, or claim to them, whether we conſider the labour of the Parents in acquiring them, or their affection to their Children; for ſince they love no body like their Children, and have a right

to

to the fruits of their own induſtry and labour, this love entitles them beſt to their Eſtates, when they are dead and have done with them; and therefore the Civil Law, (which is the Publick Reaſon) gives to the Children the Eſtate of their Parents though they die inteſtate, and without any ſignification of their Will and Pleaſure; preſuming that they who make no declaration to the contrary, do always intend to go along with Reaſon and Natural Affection, which both beſtow the Eſtates of Parents on their Children. Diſ. VI.

But though this be very certain, yet the manner of proportioning out this Eſtate to the Children, how it is to be divided among them, is, and hath always been, very uncertain, moſt Kingdoms of the World differing from one the other, and moſt of them, from themſelves, at different times; and indeed it ſeems to be a matter properly determinable by the Laws and Conſtitutions of every Country; for though we are importun'd by many loud and noiſy pretences of a *Divine Right of Succeſſion*, in favour of the eldeſt born, yet, if examin'd well, the Right of Succeſſion will be found to be built upon prudential Conſiderations only, back'd with the authority of God's Commands to his own People the *Jews*. When a Child is born,

Diſ. VI. born, the Parent ſees there is one to inherit what he has, and to ſucceed to all his labours; and ſeeks no farther for an Heir. Thus far is natural, that this Child ſhould enjoy whatever the Parent leaves, and build up his Name and Family, becauſe there is no one elſe to do it; but when, in time, the Parent comes to have more Children; then the *neceſſity* of the eldeſt ſucceeding, grows ſomewhat leſs, becauſe there are more Children that can anſwer to the ſame deſign and end, and build up the Name and Family, as well as the eldeſt; and then the neceſſity, is chang'd into *Decency* and *Conveniency*. It is then moſt decent, that the elder ſhould be preferr'd to the younger, becauſe he was before him, and has done nothing to deſerve the being caſt behind him; it is reaſon enough that he ſhould ſucceed to all the advantages, if there be no reaſon to the contrary: To be born the firſt, is, as it were, the lucky chance that God hath given him; the lot by which the differences that might ariſe betwixt the Children of the ſame Parents, is decided; and this is that which I call the *Conveniency* of the eldeſt Children's ſucceeding to the better part of their Parents Eſtates; for where that is found neceſſary to the raiſing and preſerving Families, that the better part

of

of an Eſtate ſhould go along with him who is deſign'd to build up the Name of the Tribe and Houſe, there can be no determination made with leſs exception, or blame, or occaſion of diſpute and quarrel, than that the eldeſt ſhould ſucceed; becauſe that *he* ſhould be the eldeſt, was the determination of God, and not the artifice or deſign of any Man; add to this, that the elder may well be preſum'd to be the Wiſer, and conſequently fitter to be the Head and Father of the Family; and I believe there will appear but little more of *Divine Right* in the ſucceſſion of the eldeſt, than of any other, excepting what is fetch'd from the Commands of God to his own People the *Jews*. That the eldeſt amongſt the *Jews* were born to many priviledges and honours above the reſt of their Brethren, is evident from abundance of places in the Old Teſtament, and that they were to inherit their Fathers poſſeſſions appears both from Command and from Examples. So in *Deut.* 21. 15. *If a Man hath two Wives, one belov'd, and another hated, and they have born him Children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firſt-born Son be hers that was hated: then it ſhall be, when he maketh his Sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the Son of the beloved, firſt-born, before the* Son Diſ. VI.

Diſ. VI. *Son of the hated, which is indeed the firſt-born: but he ſhall acknowledge the Son of the hated for the firſt-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his Strength, the right of the firſt-born is his.* So *Jacob* ſays, Gen. 49. 3. Reuben *thou art my firſt-born, my might, and the beginning of my ſtrength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.* As if the right of the firſt-born, were built on this. From whence alſo, it appears, that the right of the firſt-born was a right to *a double portion* of the Father's Eſtate. Which is ſeen alſo, 1 Chron. 5. 1. *Now the Sons of* Reuben *the firſt-born of* Iſrael, *(for he was the firſt-born, but foraſmuch as he defiled his Fathers Bed, his Birthright was given unto the Sons of* Joſeph, &c. Not that the Sons of *Joſeph* had the dignity or principality, above their Brethren; but that *Joſeph's* Children were the Heads of *two* Tribes, which was a double portion, the right of the firſt-born. So *Solomon* bids his Mother, *ask for* Adonijah, *the kingdom alſo, for he was his elder Brother*; and ſo it is ſaid of *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Chron. 21. 3. that *he gave his Sons great gifts of Silver and of Gold, and of precious things, with fenced Cities in* Judah, *but the Kingdom gave he to* Jehoram, *becauſe he was the firſt-born.* So that it need not be doubted, but

but that amongſt the *Jews*, the firſt-born ſucceeded to at leaſt a double portion of all that the Father had, by God's appointment and command; and might lay claim to it, by a Divine Right; but how any one elſe but *Jews* can make ſuch claim to ſuch ſucceſſion, is not yet ſo manifeſt. But how then can the diſinheriting of Children become a caſe of Conſcience, if ſo be that the Laws and Commands of God to the *Jews* in theſe matters affect not Chriſtians? In anſwer to which, we ſay, that a Command of God to the *Jews*, neither is, nor ought to be, the Rule of Conſcience to Chriſtians, any farther than ſuch command is agreeable to the light of Nature, and good Reaſon; and they who through weakneſs, and an undue application of ſuch Command to themſelves, think themſelves thereby oblig'd, are under a miſtake, and bring upon themſelves a new yoak; for a Command to the *Jews*, obliges *Jews* only: But when a Command of God to the *Jews*, carries its reaſon, decency and conveniency along with it, when the wiſe and civiliz'd People of moſt Nations adopt it into their own Country Laws, and when the Uſages and Cuſtoms of ones own Land run the ſame way, and there is nothing better and more reaſonable to object to it, *then*, ſuch Command

Dif. VI.

Diſc. VI. of God to the *Jews*, begins to look as if it affected Chriſtians alſo; it *looks*, I ſay, as if it did, but indeed it does not, for it is, in truth, the weight of theſe other conſiderations that enforces ſuch Command; and becauſe it has had the honour of being commanded by God, Men prefer it, and make it a Rule to themſelves, which yet for its own ſake, and without thoſe other conſiderations, they never would; as appears from our paſſing by a great many Commands of God to the *Jews*, without any manner of regard had to them, only becauſe we do not find them reaſonable in themſelves, nor convenient for us.

The diſinheriting of Children, therefore, becomes a Caſe of Conſcience, upon theſe conſiderations, to Chriſtians: The Chriſtian Law commands all Parents to make a reaſonable and due Proviſion for their Children, but becauſe this is general and indefinite, and a Man is as much to ſeek, as before, what quantity and proportion of Proviſion he is oblig'd to make, therefore he looks out for a more particular Rule of direction in this matter; and finding that the Laws of wiſe and civil Nations, have at all times generally agreed to prefer the firſt-born to a conſiderable ſhare of the Fathers Eſtate, beyond the

the reſt, for the raiſing and preſerving Fa- Diſ. VI.
milies, and for the avoiding many Miſ-
chiefs, and for other good Reaſons; and that the Laws of God himſelf to his own People were the ſame, and that the Laws and Cuſtoms of his own Country agree to it, and that there is nothing reaſonable or material to object, or oppoſe, to ſo doing, the Conſcience cannot find a better Rule to walk by; and ſince it will walk by ſome or other, it will moſt reaſonably chooſe the beſt, and that which is leaſt liable to exceptions and inconveniencies.

Since therefore theſe are the Reaſons and Conſiderations, that induce an obligation on the Conſciences of Parents, to make ſuch a particular Proviſion for their eldeſt Children, by leaving them the better part of their Eſtates, they will unavoidably feel concern and trouble, when they offend againſt this Rule, without ſufficient Cauſe and Reaſon; ſuch Cauſe and Reaſon as wiſe and civil Nations aſſign and allow of by their Laws and Cuſtoms.

The Cauſes that are commonly aſſign'd, to juſtifie Parents diſinheriting their Children, are a great many, I will only mention the moſt conſiderable; and *firſt*, *the ſtriking of Parents*, has been all along eſteem'd a ſufficient cauſe for the diſinheriting and caſting off Children: There ſeems

Diſ. VI. to be ſo much of Undutifulneſs and Impiety in ſuch violence, that one cannot hear of ſuch an action, without deſiring and aſſenting to its puniſhment. The Ancients allowed but of two Excuſes for this Crime, the one was, when they could not poſſibly avoid a huge miſchief from their Parents, without ſtriking them; it muſt be in defending themſelves, and that not from a ſmall correction, or a little ſuffering, but from ſome blow that might endanger them; ſome evil, that could not be preſum'd to be intended by a Parent to a Child, but might be the effect of a blind and unadviſed rage; in ſuch a caſe, it was *excus'd*, rather than *allowed*, if a Child ſhould ſtrike his Parent; they did not, for this misfortune, think he deſerv'd to be undone, and diſinherited; becauſe they believ'd, the Parent himſelf, when he recovered his ſobriety of mind, and uſual calm, would be glad to find a great miſchief prevented by ſuch oppoſition. The other Excuſe of Children wounding or ſtriking Parents was, if it were done in fighting for, and defending their Country; the Ancients preferr'd the liberties and ſafety of their Country to all other conſiderations whatſoever; if *we* do not ſo too, it is not that we have either more Reaſon, Honour, or Religion, than they had, but a more con-

contracted, narrow mind, and intereſt, Diſ. VI.
to think on. If it had happened that a Father took part with the Enemies of his Country, and in fight, were met and wounded by his Son, the Father afterwards might not, for this, beſtow his Birth-right on another; he was not hereby preſum'd undutiful or impious, nor to be puniſhed as ſuch: the Duty he ow'd his Country was antecedent to, and greater than, what he ow'd his Parent; and the Parent was in a wrong place when he ſuffered at his hands. And yet for any cauſe beſides, or upon any other account than theſe two, the Children might not touch the Hair of the Parents Head, nor lift up an hand againſt them, without falling from all the right and advantage, their birth and deſcent might entitle them to.

Another Cauſe that juſtified the Parents diſinheriting his Child, was, the being found to have contriv'd his Death by Poyſon or other ſecret method; the having laid ſnares to intrap him into any miſchief; he was deſervedly thought unworthy to receive any benefit from the Parents, who had contriv'd, or was privy to any deſign of doing them any miſchief, not only to the taking away their life, but to the hurting them, in Body or Eſtate. Nay, if the Children did but *accuſe* their Parents,

Dif. VI. of any Crime by which they were brought into hazard of either baniſhment, or mutilation, or of loſing their lives, and the Parents were acquitted, if the Children did this voluntarily and without conſtraint, the Parents might juſtly diſinherit them, and caſt them off, although this accuſation were of a crime committed againſt the State. And that, without contradiction to what has been ſaid before; for a Child is only authoris'd to oppoſe the Parent, even to his miſchief, when he is openly and manifeſtly in war againſt his Country, but not when the matter is only ſuſpected, and not prov'd, as in accuſations it is not; for Children are preſum'd to think the beſt of their Parents, and to conſtrue every thing in their favour, and not to be convinc'd, when it is againſt them, but by plain and evident matter of fact; and therefore an accuſer of his Parents has been all along, look'd upon as a malicious, odious Creature, and therefore very fit to be cut off from all their favour.

Theſe things touch the Parents Perſon, and are immediately the effects of the Childrens ill intentions, they are concern'd in them; there are other cauſes that juſtifie the Parent diſinheriting Children, when they are only *negligent of their Duty*, either careleſly or deſignedly, when the Parent

rent falls into frenzy, or any ſuch diſabi- Diſ. VI.
lity, when he is taken Captive by ene-
mies abroad, or impriſon'd at home, if
the Child neglect either to look carefully
after him, and to make due proviſion for
him, or to get him ſet at liberty if it be
in his power, all theſe caſes afford the Pa-
rent, when he recovers his underſtanding
and his freedom, juſt occaſion of diſin-
heriting, and throwing by, ſuch Child, for
every body ſees he was unnatural, and de-
ſerves no favour. It is but fit that he ſhould
be, in his turn, neglected and expos'd,
who ſuffer'd his Parent to be ſo ſerv'd,
when he could with his eaſe have hindred
it. *With his eaſe*, we muſt add; for we
muſt not haſtily conclude, that all Chil-
dren offend againſt their Duty, who do
not pay their Parents Debts, and deliver
them from bonds and impriſonment; for
ſometimes the Children are juſt able to
live themſelves, and have Families of their
own to maintain, and if they ſhould diſ-
charge their Parents Debts, muſt contract
new ones of their own: And ſometimes Pa-
rents are ſo extravagant that there would
be no end of paying for them, and there-
fore all things muſt be well conſidered,
before we condemn the Children who ſuf-
fer their Parents to lie in Priſon or Capti-
vity; and we muſt ſay, at preſent, that

Diſ. VI. they who can with eaſe, or with no great diſeaſe and inconveniency, deliver them from any hardſhips, are ſo much oblig'd to do it, that the neglect thereof is juſtly puniſhable with diſinheriting, whenever the Parent recovers to an ability of leaving them, or depriving them of, any Eſtate.

The *other Cauſes* that are aſſign'd to juſtifie the diſinheriting Children, are ſuch as concern not the Parents *Perſon*, but his Fame and Reputation in ſome reſpects; when their faults are ſcandalous, and reflect diſgrace and infamy upon the Parents and the Family, when they are extremely wicked and immoral, and give no hopes of reformation and amendment, but are, to all appearance, irreclaimable. Vice and Virtue are of as much importance, and therefore as much to be conſidered by Laws, as Right and Wrong, in the building and preſerving Families and Tribes; and it tends exceedingly to the advantage of a State and Government, that Virtue in Children ſhould have the encouragement of hoping to ſucceed to their Father's Eſtate, and that notorious Vice ſhould receive the like diſcouragement. There is no body thinks that the compaſſions of Nature, (which are oftentimes its weakneſs) ſhould carry it above the conſiderations

rations of Virtue and Goodneſs; *i. e.* that a Child ſhould without diſpute, ſucceed to all the advantages of Honour, and Eſtate, let him be never ſo vicious and immoral, and every way unworthy of his Birth and Education, only becauſe he happened to be born of ſuch Parents. A Parent has not a method more likely to ſucceed, nor any reſtraint more powerful over the inſolent or vicious tempers of Children, than the power of putting them by their Eſtates, when they make themſelves unworthy of them; and therefore 'tis the greater wonder, and the greater pity alſo, to ſee ſome Parents ſo unadviſedly deveſt themſelves of this power before their time, by putting their Children in full poſſeſſion of what they have, before their Death. Diſ. VI.

The caſe indeed may ſometimes happen, when it may be fit and reaſonable, and profitable ſo to do; but it is but very ſeldom, and the neceſſity ought to be preſſing, and the advantages very great and certain, before 'tis done; becauſe the events of ſuch a practice have been often miſchievous, and very pittiable. The Children thank them once for all; they thank them once, for that, whoſe hope would have kept them in a dutiful dependence all their lives long; this forward, and intended, kindneſs of the Parents, has

Diſ. VI. has made many Children ungracious and unnatural, that would have been, at leaſt to all appearance, both dutiful and obſervant, if they had held them ſtill in hope and expectation. There is a huge difference to be made betwixt, a ſordid and unnatural cloſeneſs that will part with nothing to Children before Death, and ſuch an open and profuſe folly as will part with every thing, and lay the Parent at the mercy of the Child. In ſuch a caſe, the Parent lets go the hold he has upon his Children, and loſes one of the moſt effectual means of keeping them dutiful and good, and virtuous and obedient; for when there is no more expectation, there will be no more dependance, and then it will be well, if they only grow neglectful, and not alſo inſolent and unnatural.

But this a little by the by, when I was ſhewing how reaſonable and juſtifiable it is in Parents, to diſinherit Children whoſe immoralities and wickedneſs cry loud to Heaven, and reflect ſhame and diſhonour on the Family, and exclude all hope of reformation, or of being an uſeful member of the Commonwealth: And therefore if a Daughter were at any time found to have tranſgreſs'd the Laws of Honour and Virtue, ſhe was, without any farther conſideration, left to the pity of her Parents, and could

could lay claim to no Proviſion, either by the Laws of God or Man. Diſ. VI.

You ſee that all theſe Cauſes are ſo reaſonable and preſſing, that at the firſt hearing and conſidering them, they juſtifie the Parents diſinheriting their Children: They leave no matter of complaint or murmuring behind them; when once we are convinc'd the Children are guilty of any of theſe things, we acquit the Parents caſting them off; and the Parents are acquitted by themſelves, their Conſcience makes them no reproaches of cruelty, injuſtice, or want of natural affection, to their Children; in all theſe caſes the Childrens offences diſpenſe with the Parents Duty, and remove or ſet aſide their obligation to make Proviſion for them; and without theſe faults, a Parent will neither be eaſie nor innocent in caſting off his Children; he muſt not therefore adviſe only with his own paſſion or humour, but with the Laws and Cuſtoms of his Country; he muſt have ſuch reaſons as other People will approve, and ſuch cauſe as will juſtifie him to ſuch as know the caſe, though ſtrangers to him; nay, though the Laws and Cuſtoms may leave a Man to act very *arbitrarily*, yet it will not be long *ſatisfactorily*, unleſs there appear good reaſon at the bottom. A Parent will not be

eaſie,

Dif. VI. eaſie, after the fit of anger is over, in caſting off his Child, unleſs there be better reaſon for ſo doing than appears to the World, or reaſon enough appearing, to juſtifie him to others, in what he does.

A Man can never deſpiſe the opinion of the World, or bear a hard cenſure with eaſe, unleſs he know ſomething more of the matter than the World knows, or think himſelf injur'd by ſuch cenſure; and therefore a Parent muſt know of more offences and provocations than other People know of, to be eaſie in rejecting his Child, or other People muſt know enough to juſtifie him. Theſe things are not well enough conſidered by all Parents, who exerciſe this ſupreme authority over their Children, and diſinherit them and caſt them off, for weak and trivial cauſes. Sometimes, for no better reaſon than ſome *unſightlineſs* or ill ſhape, as if the Parents *fancy* (unnaturally nice) were to paſs for *judgment*, and the Children muſt be puniſh'd for what they cannot help, and for what the Parents are themſelves to blame too often. Sometimes, for a *defect of parts* and abilities, not ſuch as would ſuffice for the plain and honeſt purpoſes of life, but ſuch as are to render them accompliſh'd, and agreeable, which are often too near to forwardneſs and vanity, and

and confidence, and might be better ſpar'd. Sometimes for ſome *perſonal diſlike*, which is really at the bottom unaccountable, and therefore blameable; for Parents never muſt pretend *antipathy* and natural *averſion* to their Children; the ſubject will not bear it, and whatever Parent feels it, he ought to ſuſpect himſelf of ſomething much amiſs, and it will never paſs for a good excuſe for neglecting Children. Sometimes they throw them off for ſmall miſcarriages, and little venial faults, that *might* be pardon'd to a tollerably good *Servant*, and *ſhould* be overlook'd in *Children*. It is plain, from many poſitive Commands, and many Prohibitions, in Holy Scriptures, as well as from Experience and Examples, that Parents *can* be hard and unnatural to their Children, and do them great injury; or elſe it would be ſtrange to tell them, that they ought to conſider and make allowances for the miſcarriages of their Children, to remember they are heedleſs, wanton, and unmindful of the conſequences of their action, and deſerve forgiveneſs, even when ſome fits of obſtinacy will not, for the preſent, let them ask it; and that it would be over-rigorous to take advantage of them. Dif. VI.

Sometimes it alſo happens, that the Children are diſpoſſeſs'd, firſt of the Father's love,

Diſ. VI. love, and then of all their hopes of ſucceſſion by wrong ſurmiſe or falſe ſuggeſtion; they are unhappily miſtaken, of ill deſigns by the Parents themſelves, or ſecretly accus'd by others, of ſomething that will make them odious to their Parents, and unworthy of their favour. Sometimes the *ſecond* Wife is to make way to the Inheritance, for her own Children, by falſe and ſoft Inſinuations, to the prejudice of the Children of the firſt Marriage, and ſometimes by downright accuſation of them; and ſometimes this ill province falls to the ſhare of other Kinſmen and Relations, whoſe proſpect of ſucceeding is not very diſtant. Nothing can well be more malicious and wicked than this, and the leaſt that a Parent can do, will be to conſider, who, and whoſe friends, they are, that come to provoke and ſet him againſt his own Children; he ought in reaſon to ſuſpect ſuch as ſhall certainly be gainers, if his diſpleaſure take effect and proceed to diſinheriting: He is oblig'd to be very cautious how he admits of accuſations, and to weigh all things well, before he believe; for the peace of his mind will very much depend upon the care and diligence he uſes to get good information. And here it is, that it ſeems proper to meet with *an Obſervation, which*

they

they ſay [Biſhop *Sanderſons* Ser. 14. ad Aul. p. 199.] *is grounded upon manifold experience, that where the right Heirs have been diſinherited, upon almoſt whatſoever pretence, the bleſſing of God hath not uſually followed upon the Perſons, and ſeldom hath the Eſtate proſpered in the hands of thoſe that have ſucceeded in their rooms.* It is with this obſervation, I believe, as with moſt others, (where the Judgments of God are call'd in to execute Vengeance) that one or two Examples either make a Rule, or confirm it, if made before; and a hundred others go for nothing, or are overlook'd, that do not fall in with ſuch a Maxim, eſpecially when it is on the ſide of Juſtice and Religion, to all appearance. Dif. VI.

A Parent may moſt certainly diſinherit his Son, for good Cauſes, ſuch as I have been already mentioning, with the conſent of Reaſon and Senſe, the Laws and Cuſtoms of wiſe Nations, and the Examples of the beſt Men, and with the approbation of God's Law, and his own Conſcience, as certainly as he may do any thing elſe; and when this guilty Perſon is remov'd, why the next Heir may not ſucceed without any terror on his mind, or apprehenſion of God's anger and judgments to follow, one can never ſee a Reaſon. What place can the anger of God or his

Diſ. VI. judgments have, where neither the Parent nor the Succeſſor have ſin'd? If indeed the Parent do wilfully, furiouſly, and without juſt cauſe, diſinherit the eldeſt Son, God may, if he ſee fit, (and that is all) puniſh the injuſtice of the Parent, in bringing to miſery the appointed Heir; or if the appointed Heir, has by unjuſt and wicked means, by lyes and falſe ſuggeſtions, abus'd his Parent, and excited him to diſinherit the true Heir, he may be, debtor to God's juſtice in this World, and be puniſh'd for ſuch wicked fraud, either in his Perſon or Eſtate, or both, as God pleaſes: But when a Man comes innocently, and without his fault or ſeeking, to inherit an Eſtate, there can be no reaſon to fear God's Anger, or apprehend his Judgments, or the want of his Bleſſing, if he do not otherwiſe provoke him. The truth of it is, Mankind is very prone to Superſtition; and entertains very greedily ſuch Maxims and Obſervations as have a face of Piety, and Juſtice, and cloſe with the fondneſs of natural affections, though in truth there be no good reaſon at the bottom, if well examin'd; and then, when a Man falls into any misfortunes (as there are few who do not, and have not their lives more than checquered with them) the eyes of People are upon him, and if he

he be before mark'd out by any of theſe Rules, and in a condition capable of having them applied to him, his misfortunes ſhall undoubtedly be aſcrib'd to his condition, and be call'd the effects of God's Judgments due to him upon ſuch accounts, and for ſuch reaſons. A very falſe, and hazardous, uncharitable, way of judging. Diſ. VI.

This is what I thought convenient to ſay upon the matter of Peoples diſinheriting and rejecting their Children, who are yet oblig'd by the Chriſtian Religion, to make all due and fitting proviſion for them: Theſe are the Reaſons that juſtifie the Parents in caſting them off, and diſpenſe with all their Obligations; and whatever Parent will act arbitrarily and without them, will never be able to be at quiet in his own mind, or perform the duty he owes to his Children; he muſt needs be ſelf-condemn'd, *and*, with St. *Paul*, *worſe than an Infidel.*

I will make an end of this Subject, when I have made this one obſervation more, that, the Parents who conſume their whole Eſtate, with which they ſhould provide for their Children, in Gaming, Drinking, Riot, Luxury, and ſinful Pleaſures, are in no better condition, nor do any better diſ-

Diſ. VI. charge their duty to their Children, than they who for little or no cauſe, Anger, Folly, or Humour, diſinherit their Children, and cut them off from their Eſtates. There is, indeed, great difference betwixt the *minds* and affections of theſe two ſorts of Parents, but the *effect* to the Children is the ſame; and ſince the Commands of God to Parents, to make proviſion for the Children, are given for the Children's ſakes, if theſe Commands take not effect, it is all one to *them*, what it is that hinders it; they are full as deſtitute and helpleſs by their Parents neglect, as they could be by their diſpleaſure; and they become as miſerable when the Parent's luxury and vice deprive them of their Maintenance, as when they are diſinherited through cauſleſs anger, and by falſe ſuggeſtions. And a Parent who is thus abus'd into the wronging of his Children, is much more innocent and pittiable, than he who riotouſly, vainly and viciouſly ſpends the Eſtate, that might and ſhould contribute to his Children's ſuſtenance and welfare, becauſe this Man does willingly deprive himſelf of the means of doing his Duty; and the other who is abus'd, is under a force and conſtraint, acting reaſonably to himſelf, though miſtaken through the faults of other Peo-

People. And therefore theſe luxurious Diſ. VI.
fooliſh Spenders, when they come to die, or are by miſery reduc'd before-hand to conſider, cannot ſatisfie themſelves, with knowing and remembring that they never had any thought or intention to wrong their Children, but lov'd them infinitely, and wiſh'd them all the happineſs imaginable; they cannot ſatisfie themſelves with this, whilſt through their folly, and their negligence, they ſee thoſe Children miſerable, that might and ſhould have been provided for; and it is not enough for them to grieve, as they will naturally do, at the misfortunes of their Children, but they ought to repent and ask God's pardon, for they have treſpaſs'd againſt him, by the neglect of their Duty; for that, I have ſhewed you, is the way which the Chriſtian Religion takes to make all People in the World happy: It binds the Natural and Civil Duties upon all related, and concern'd, with ſtrong and ſtrict Commands of God, under ſevere Penalties, and huge Rewards, ſo that whatever Chriſtian now neglects the performance of them, he ſhall not only be accounted heedleſs, ill advis'd, and unnatural, but highly ſinful and provoking, and ſhall without Repentance be ſeverely puniſhed.

Dis. VI. nished. He is esteem'd to deny the Faith, and to be worse than an Infidel, and therefore it will be more tolerable for them in the Day of Judgment, than for him.

Discourse

Diſcourſe VII.

1 Peter iii. Verſes 1, 2.

Ye Wives be in ſubjection to your own Husbands; that if any obey not the Word, they alſo may, without the Word, be won by the Converſation of the Wives: While they behold their chaſt Converſation coupled with Fear.

THE Scripture does, in a great many places, lay moſt expreſs Commands on Wives, to live in ſubjection to their Husbands; but I chooſe, in treating of this Duty, to ſpeak to this paſſage in St. *Peter*, becauſe it contains not only the *Command*, but one of the good *effects* of ſuch *Submiſſion*, which is a great encouragement to the fulfilling it; for when a Law carries its reaſon with it, it is more likely to find a good acceptance and compliance, eſpecially with quick and diſputing People, than when it comes, arm'd only with its own authority and power. The Command in the Text, is *to Wives, to be in Subjection to their Husbands.* The

Diſc. VII. encouragement to Obedience, is the great likelyhood of good effects to follow, the winning over the unbelieving Husband, *that if any obey not the Word, they may, without the Word, be won by the Converſation of the Wife*; which Converſation is to be *chaſt*, and *with fear*; *while they behold their chaſt Converſation coupled with fear.* Which laſt words, (as alſo the three verſes following) are either an explanation of what it is, *to be in Subjection to Huſbands*, or a deſcription of ſuch qualifications, as will make a very good Wife to her Husband, and acceptable to God, and will therefore come, in time, to be conſidered at large. In the mean time let us ſee a little in the firſt place, to the Command, *Wives be in Subjection to your own Husbands.*

It is impoſſible for any company of People to ſubſiſt any while together, without a Subordination of one to the other. Where all will command, none will obey, and then there will be nothing done, but miſchief. We ſee when People meet, who have no pretentions one upon another, they are fain to agree among themſelves to allow a Preference, and ſome kind of Superiority to ſome of the Company, that buſineſs may be done; they govern themſelves either by known eſtabliſh'd Rules

and

and Cuſtoms of Honour and Ceremony, Diſ. VII.
or elſe they conſider Age, Capacity, or Experience; ſomething or other there is, that determines their choice, becauſe they find it abſolutely neceſſary to ſilence the pretences of every Man, by preferring ſome or other, that they may obtain the end of their aſſembling. Even among Friends and Equals, where the leaſt pretence to *Pre-eminence* would diſſolve the friendſhip, and break up all the intercourſe, yet is there a neceſſity that one ſhould yield it to the other; and ſo they do, to make the Converſation uſeful; and the longer People are to live together, the greater is the neceſſity of Subordination and Subjection one to another, becauſe there will unavoidably riſe ſtill more and more occaſions of diviſion and difference, which will require the greater Unity; now there can be no ſuch thing as Unity, where two Parties contend for, or pretend to Superiority, or ſuch Equality as will not yield. All this is evident in Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, and private Corporations, either great, or little. And this ſhould help to convince the Wives, who are now going to make up a Family, that there is an abſolute neceſſity of Government, which ſuppoſes Subjection ſome where or other: They muſt needs ſee, that every Family

Diſ. VII. (the original indeed and model of Bodies Corporate, Cities, and Commonwealths) muſt have its proper Superiour, whom all the reſt muſt needs obey.

And when they are convinc'd of this great Article, the next enquiry is to be, whether this Superiority, that is ſo unavoidably neceſſary to the Support of Rule and Order, is well and rightly plac'd in *Husbands*, rather than in *Wives*; and for this, they are to conſider, 1. Where Nature has deſign'd this Sovereignty; 2*ly*, Where Uſe and Cuſtom have plac'd it; and *laſtly*, what the Laws of God ſay to the matter. 1*ſt*. They are to conſider where *Nature* has deſign'd this Sovereignty, and that we may well preſume to be, where ſhe has given the greateſt ſtrength and abilities; where ſhe has made the body and the mind fitteſt to undergo the toils and labours that are abſolutely neceſſary to the being and well-being of the World, to the carrying on buſineſs at home, and trade abroad, to the defending ones Country from foreign Foes, and to the adminiſtring Juſtice to one another; now where we perceive Nature has beſt qualified her Creatures for performance of theſe functions, that are ſo neceſſary, that the World cannot ſubſiſt in peace and order without them, we may very

very ſafely conclude ſhe deſign'd to place the Superiority. Now whether Women have naturally ſtrength and abilities of body and mind to go through theſe things, if Men ſhould for a while neglect them, need not be queſtion'd; it is demonſtrably certain that they have not; and if they have not, who ſhould do them, but Men, whom Nature hath fitted for it? And in as much as Nature hath made Men neceſſary for theſe works, ſhe hath made them ſuperiour to ſuch as are not able to do them; for where People are in other reſpects equal, ſtrength of body and capacity of mind will undoubtedly make them ſuperiour. We find it is ſo, in all the Creatures of the World beſides. And though there are a great many Inſtances of the contrary, yet they will never avail to the overthrowing the viſible deſign of Nature: Though there be many Women ſuperiour to many Men, in ſtrength of body, and abilities of mind, in fineneſs of parts, greatneſs of capacity, ſoundneſs of judgment, and ſtrength and faithfulneſs of memory, yet the number of ſuch, neither is, nor ever was, nor ever will be, great enough, to ſhew that Nature intended to give that Sex the Superiority over the Men: and though Uſe and Education might make ſome alteration in the caſe, yet Diſ. VII.

Dif. VII. yet all the Uſe and Education in the World, would never fit them for the performances of the great buſineſſes above-mention'd of Trade and Merchandiſe, and making Wars abroad, and executing Juſtice at home; the abilities of managing which, are evident indications of Nature's intending to make the Men ſuperior to the Women.

And agreeable to this manifeſt deſign of Nature, have been the uſages and cuſtoms of all Countries in the World, at all times, which was *the ſecond thing* to be enquir'd after. Theſe indeed have been ſo much to the diſadvantage of that Sex, that, without all doubt, they have done it manifeſt injury, and have not had ſo great regard to it, as in all reaſon and ſenſe they ought to have had; ſo far from diſputing the *Priority* with them, that they have plac'd them but a little above their Slaves, or menial Servants, contrary to Reaſon and Decency, and the deſign of Nature, who intended them for Friends and Companions in all their fortunes. Even the Nations, that have been accounted wiſeſt and moſt civiliz'd, have yet allowed them to be only made for the ſolace of Mankind, the care of ſome domeſtick Matters, and the continuance of the World, and would let them bear no other part in it,

it, so that the searches after the Usages and Customs of all times will be but short, and do them little service. Dis. VII.

They have only, in the third and last place, to enquire, what help Religion and the Laws of God afford, the Sanctuary of all the weak, and which provide security against Oppression and Injustice. When St. *Paul* is giving Rules to the Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. he says amongst other things, v. 11, 12. *Let the Woman learn in silence, with all subjection: But I suffer not a Woman to teach,* (i. e. in publick) *nor to usurp authority over the Man, but to be in silence,* and then subjoins these Reasons, *for* Adam *was first formed, then* Eve. *And* Adam *was not deceiv'd,* (i. e. first) *but the Woman being deceiv'd was* (first. i. e.) *in the Transgression:* From whence it appears, that he makes the Creation or Formation of *Eve* after *Adam*, to be one reason of her Subjection: And this reason would have held good, if both had continued innocent, for it was a Reason, before they transgress'd, and therefore St. *Paul* urges the Subjection of all Women to their Husbands, upon that account, because the first of Men, was before the first of Women. But the second reason of the Women's Subjection, is fetch'd, from *Eve's* being first in the Transgression; she was deceiv'd

Diſ. VII. ceiv'd firſt, and then deceiv'd her Huſband; ſhe was undone by diſobeying God, and *he* undone by following her, ſhe muſt therefore rule no more; it was part of her Curſe and Puniſhment that her deſire ſhould be to her Husband, or ſubject to her Huſband, and he ſhould rule over her. Well, but how could this Subjection of the Woman to her Husband, be a part of the Curſe and Puniſhment for her Tranſgreſſion, when it is plain, ſhe was to be in ſubjection, even in Paradiſe, and State of Innocence, by virtue of *Adam's being firſt form'd, and then* Eve, which is St. *Paul's* Argument? To reconcile theſe things, we muſt know, that Subjection in Paradiſe would have been no task or burthen, it would have been more eaſie and delightful to obey in that State, than it can be now to command; it would not indeed have been Obedience, but the doing all they lik'd and lov'd themſelves; Man would have then had no folly, vanity, pride, ſelf-conceit or ill-nature, from whence proceed all idle, harſh, ungrateful, and imperious Orders; but all his thoughts, words, and deſigns, would have been wiſe and reaſonable, juſt and kind, regular and orderly, ſo that the execution of them would have been moſt eaſie and delightful; they would have carried

their

their conviction, along with them, they would have all appear'd ſo uſeful, ſo becoming, and ſo neceſſary to their good, that Women would have haſtened, with great pleaſure, to perform them; they would *themſelves* alſo have wanted that extraordinary good opinion of their worth and abilities, which makes them frequently perverſe and diſputatious, when any thing is injoyn'd them, and conſequently would not have found that riſing and reſiſtency within, which now they do; in a word, all things elſe, as well as themſelves would have been much otherwiſe than now they are, and therefore *Subjection* would have been no burthen to the *Women*, nor the *Command* have given any great authority to the *Men*. To make Subjection therefore part of the *Curſe*, and Puniſhment affixed to *Eve*, and her Poſterity of the ſame Sex, it muſt needs be, that Subjection ſhould be in things difficult and unacceptable, againſt their will and deſire, a Subjection to many vain and idle, to many froward and unkind, to many injurious and auſtere Commands, which the fooliſh, ſevere, imperious humours of the Husbands lay upon them. *To have their deſire to their Husbands*, ſignifies here, *to be ſubject to their Wills*. You ſhall not be Miſtreſs of your ſelf, nor have any deſire

Diſ. VII.

Diſ. VII. ſatisfied, but what is approv'd of by your Husband, you ſhall be wholly under his power and tutelage, he ſhall command you many things that you diſlike, and yet you ſhall obey; as unreaſonable and extravagant as his deſire ſhall often appear to you, yet it ſhall govern you, and you ſhall have no other to take place, but when he finds it fit to yield it to you.

It is impoſſible to make leſs of a Puniſhment and Curſe than this; and ſince St. *Paul* founds this unacceptable Subjection of the Wives to their Husbands, upon this place in *Geneſis*, wherein God layes it on them as a puniſhment for *Eve's* being firſt in the Tranſgreſſion, it is impoſſible any way to avoid it; and as manifeſt it is, that ſo it has been commanded by God, from the beginning of the World. This Subjection is not therefore founded *only* on the Power and Strength and Superiour Abilities, with which it pleas'd God to endue Men, above the Women; nor on the Uſages and Cuſtoms of the World, (which Power and Strength will always have upon their ſide) but moſt eſpecially on *God's Commands*, laying it as a puniſhment on the Sex, for the forward tranſgreſſion of their firſt Mother; and that it might not be evaded, as a *Curſe* and *Puniſhment* which all People may avoid as much as they can,

the

the ſame thing is commanded over and over again in the *New Teſtament*, as in Coloſſ. 3. 18. *Wives Submit your ſelves, unto your own Husbands, as it is fit, in the Lord.* So in *Eph.* 5. 22. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord; for the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church*; and concludes, *let the Wife ſee that ſhe reverence her Husband*, and ſo in many other places, as well as in the Text. But becauſe *to be in Subjection*, is a Phraſe of indefinite and uncertain Senſe, ſince all Inferiours are commanded to be *ſubject* to the higher Powers, and Children to their Parents, and Servants to their Maſters, and Men to one another, as well as Wives to their Husbands, it will be needful for them to know in what particulars, the Wives muſt be in ſubjection to their Husbands; for a Subject cannot obey his King, nor a Son his Father, nor a Servant his Maſter, *in all things*; but each Superiour has his proper and peculiar ſway, and each inferiour has a limited Subjection: There is ſomething that ſets out the bounds of every ones Power, and every ones Obedience, and the Tranſgreſſors of them, become on one ſide, Tyrants and Uſurpers, and on the other diſobedient Rebels; and ſo it is with Wives and Husbands, the one may Diſ. VII.

Dif. VII. may exerciſe a Power that belongs not to them, and the other refuſe Submiſſion where 'tis due, and ſhould be paid. It is therefore certain, that a Wife owes no Subjection to her Husband, againſt the Laws of either God, or Man; Religion and good Morals claim the firſt place in her Obedience; and though, I think, the Laws, or rather Cuſtoms, of the Land are very tender to Women offending in the Company of their Husbands, as preſuming them under command and ſome kind of conſtraint from them, yet Religion has no ſuch conſideration, but includes them all under Sin, who commit any Sinful Actions; and no Command or Example of a Husband, will excuſe a Wife offending againſt a known Law of God, or doing any thing immoral. She owes him no Subjection in ſuch matters, he is himſelf a Rebel to their common Lord and Maſter, whilſt commanding any ſuch unlawful action. But in other matters common and indifferent, their Diſobedience will be faulty, where Reaſon, and Diſcretion, allowed of Cuſtom, Decency, and good Fame, will not make their excuſe. Where Men's Commands are evidently unreaſonable, ſhamefully indiſcreet, unuſual and unheard of, infamous, or unbecoming their Age, their Credit, Quality and Condition, they may

may be ſafely paſs'd by; *omitted* rather *than neglected* or *deſpis'd*; and becauſe it will be ask'd, who ſhall be Judges in ſuch caſe; the Wives muſt take good care, that the Commands which they comply not with, may be ſuch as will juſtifie them to any wiſe impartial People; ſo that, who *will* be Judges, they may reaſonably excuſe their non-compliance, and condemn the Men that give ſuch Orders: It will not be enough for Wives to oppoſe *their* Wills, to the Wills of their Husbands, nor Reaſons to Reaſons, unleſs apparently unequal, becauſe in both theſe caſes they do evidently contend for Maſtery; for if the Will and Reaſon of one be equal to the others, it is ſomething beſides that muſt determine who ſhall yield, and then we muſt recur to what hath been before ſaid, to know who is Superiour. Dif. VII.

The truth of it is, the People who ought to conſider theſe things beſt, are they who never trouble their Heads about them; ſo far from enquiring where, and when they muſt obey, and in what caſes they are at liberty, that they are evermore at liberty, and never are in ſubjection at all, though in the moſt reaſonable and handſom caſes that are; but forget their Duty and their Sex together. They conſider not Subjection and Submiſ-

Diſ. VII. ſion, in theſe Inſtances, as concern'd in Religion or Conſcience at all, as if they were not commanded by God as certainly as Obedience of Subjects to their Princes, of Children to their Parents, and Servants to their Maſters; Subjection, in all theſe, looks like Religious, and relating to the Conſcience, and obliging thoſe concern'd by virtue of Gods Command; and why the being in ſubjection to their Husbands ſhould not concern the Conſciences of Wives as much, they will never be able to give a reaſon; I have already ſhewed them, that the Laws of God do poſitively charge it on them.

But becauſe *Subjection*, in this place and argument, does not only ſignifie bare ſubmiſſion to the will and pleaſure of Husbands, but includes alſo other qualifications, ſuch as may make them acceptable both to God, and Men; they alſo are to come into conſideration, when we are treating of the Duty of Wives; and the firſt that is here mention'd, is *a chaſt Converſation, coupled with fear.* By *Converſation* is underſtood the whole courſe and way of living, all the exteriour menagement and behaviour; and therefore *a chaſt Converſation*, requires not only the purity and cleanneſs of the Heart, but ſuch an outward, innocent and decent carriage, as may

may denote that inward purity; it is what the Husband may ſee, becauſe he is to be won by it, and gain'd over, and it is ſaid to be *coupled with fear*, becauſe the fear of God is the ſureſt preſervative of Chaſtity in *the Heart*, and the fear of Man, of Laws, of Infamy and Shame, and ill report, the great ſecurity of a chaſt and honourable converſation *without*. There is no need of ſaying much in commendation of this great virtue, to Wives; they cannot chooſe but know, that, without it, they are Wives no longer, the band of Wedlock is immediately diſſolv'd before God; and before Man, as ſoon as the Husband pleaſes to ask the aſſiſtance of the Law; but this is not without the breach of the moſt ſolemn and tremendous Vow and Promiſe that can be thought on; the guilt of ſuch a Perjury, as cannot ever be atton'd for in this World, and of ſuch horrible injuſtice as can never be repair'd, either to Husband or to Children. In other caſes, a Perjury may take away a Mans good Name, or his Eſtate, but there may be ſome amends made him for both of them, by Repentance; his good Name may be recovered by a recantation and denial of what was ſworn to his prejudice; and his Eſtate may come again, by force of Law, or voluntary Surrender; if the Dif. VII.

Diſ. VII. life of a Father be taken away by Perjury and Injuſtice, ſome compenſation may be after made to his unhappy Children. But the Perjury and Injuſtice of an adulterous Wife, are ſuch offences as can receive no reparation or amendment; even a confeſſion of their Crime to the injur'd Party, may make him yet more miſerable, and do him farther injury; and as for ſatisfaction 'tis not in their power. How ſtrangely hard is it for ſuch to make a good and true Repentance, how long and bitter ſhould their ſorrow and compunction be before God, ſince they have ſo diſabled themſelves, from doing any thing beſides? Sure by their flexible and tender Conſtitution, and theſe Conſiderations, no People in the World, can ſin with ſuch a ſenſible and painful ſelf-conviction, as falſe Wives; and therefore there is the leſs need of enlarging any farther on this firſt Inſtance of Subjection to Husbands; the matter is ſo plain and reaſonable, ſo juſt and honeſt, that they who will not be ſubject in this point, will not (need not, I think) regard the being ſo in any other.

But it is not refraining from adulterous practice only, that is enough to denominate *a Converſation chaſt*: The outward carriage muſt be alſo honeſt and inoffenſive, void

void of *Suſpition* as well as *Blame*: And this it will be, if it be *coupled with fear*, i. e. a tender regard of Reputation and good Fame, as well as fear of offending the Husband; they muſt *provide things honeſt not only in the ſight of the Lord, but in the ſight of Men.* The Scriptures do not only call on People to ſecure their Hearts to God, but are exceeding careful to urge them to ſet forth a good example to all the World of ſtanders by, they are *by their good works to glorifie their Father who is in Heaven*; they muſt not only *be acceptable to God, but approved of Men. I will praiſe the Lord with my whole Heart, ſecretly among the Faithful, and in the midſt of the Congregation*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt. So St. *Paul* exhorts the *Theſſalonians*, and *Philippians* to ſeveral Chriſtian Duties, and Good Works, *that the Name of the Lord Jeſus might be glorified in them*; and ſo St. *Peter* would have the Chriſtians have *their Converſation honeſt among the* Gentiles, *that they might, by their good works, which they ſhould behold, glorifie God in the day of viſitation.* So in other places, *We are to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; to have our Converſation worthy of the Goſpel; and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and as becometh Saints; to give no offence in any thing,* Diſ. VII.

Diſc VII. *that the Miniſtry*, i. e. the Goſpel Diſpenſation, *be not blamed. Let as many Servants as are under the yoke, count their own Maſters worthy of all Honour, that the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed*; and more nearly to the purpoſe of the Text, Tit. 2. 5. *Let Women be diſcreet, chaſt, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands, that the word of God be not blaſphemed*; and again, *I will that younger Women marry, and keep the Houſe, to give no occaſion to the Adverſary*, i. e. to any Enemies of the Chriſtian Religion, *to ſpeak reproachfully*; that is, to reproach the Holy Religion, as tho' after all its good leſſons in all reſpects, Men liv'd no better than they did before, the Servants were no better Servants, nor the Women better Wives, than they were before they were converted, which were much to the diſgrace of Chriſtianity. So that it is not truly enough for a Chriſtian *to be* indeed virtuous and good, if he may alſo *appear* ſo; becauſe a good example is of great uſe, not only to ſilence the reproaches, obloquies and blaſphemies, or evil ſpeakings, of fooliſh, ignorant or malicious People, who for appearing viſible miſcarriages in menagement, are ready to charge Religion as a uſeleſs inſignificant thing, but for the good effect and influence

ence it has upon all that take notice of it; for as a bad Example turns to the discredit and reproach of the Profession, so does a good one to its honour and advantage, and gains insensibly upon the most obdurate minds. Dis. VII.

And that is (in the *second* place) one of the motives and encouragements St. *Peter* propounds, to the Wives, to live in a holy, careful, and religious Subjection to their Husbands, *that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won, by the Conversation of the Wives, whilst they behold their chast Conversation coupled with fear.* It is much the same advice with what St. *Paul* gives, 1 *Cor.* 7. that if an Unbeliever, either Woman or Man, were married to a Believer, the Christian should not think of parting upon that score, but stay the rather, to win, by a kind, good-natur'd Christian Conversation, the Unbelieving Party over to the Faith, *How knowest thou, O Wife, whether thou shalt save thy Husband, or thou O Man, whether thou shalt save thy Wife?* 16 v. They both of them suppose, that a Virtuous, Sober, and Religious Example, may be likely to prevail, when the Word of God it self, from the mouth of a Preacher, is of no force or value; and great indeed is the power of a good Example, well manag'd,

Diſ. VII. eſpecially where it is always preſent, as, in the caſe before us, is ſuppos'd; it is an argument that is always operating ſome way or other, a Man cannot help attending to it; he ſees, for inſtance, his Wife, by virtue of the Chriſtian Doctrine, leading a Sober, Chaſt, Religious Life, ſetting the fear of God continually before her Eyes, and practiſing the Commands of Chriſt, not only abſtaining from Adultery, and open falſhood and abomination, which the Laws, and Vengeance of her injur'd Partner might ſeverely puniſh, but alſo from all appearance of evil, out of the reach of all ſuſpition, guided in all her words and actions by the Rules of a ſtrict and ſevere virtue; ſo careful of fulfilling his Deſires, and ſatisfying to her Duty in all particulars, and living in ſuch a handſom free ſubjection to his Will, that 'tis impoſſible he ſhould not have ſome liking to the Religion and good Principles that influence her to ſuch Obedience and ſuch Virtue: He ſees the power of Chriſtianity in ſuch deſirable effects, that he will certainly conclude, it is a uſeful and moſt Holy Diſpenſation, a Religion honourable for God, and ſerviceable to Mankind.

And there is nothing ſooner likely to convert a Man to a Religion, than ſeeing

ing it very fit to be a Religion, by its Principles, and finding thoſe Principles operative and effectual to the producing what it aims at. Such an Example will perpetually reproach and diſturb him, and give him no peace, till he comply with it; it is a powerful method in the hands and menagement of a prudent Woman, and will prevail ſooner than all the ſame reaſons of Religion together, rang'd into order, with the noiſe of oppoſition and diſpute. Diſ. VII.

And if a Sober, Chaſt, Religious Converſation, *coupled with fear*, i. e. with a becoming carefulneſs of not offending, and a familiar, eaſie, free Submiſſion, be the moſt likely method of converting an unbelieving Husband to the Faith of Chriſt; there is a great deal of probability, that the ſame wiſe and good courſes will alſo obtain, to the winning over Husbands, who are already Chriſtians, from many idle or ſinful practices, and curing them of many fooliſh and perverſe humours; which may alſo be a motive and encouragement to ſuch a ſubjection as the Apoſtle preſcribes, although the Women have not unbelieving Husbands, *i. e.* ſuch as are not Chriſtians in profeſſion. Unleſs a Man be brutaliz'd to a great degree, and in a manner forſaken of God, and left entirely

to

Diſ. VII. to himſelf, the meek and quiet, chaſt and ſober Converſation of his Wife, will win and gain upon him. Few Men but have their times of thinking and conſidering; and when they ſhall remember and reflect upon the Carriage and Converſation of their Wives, and find, that inſtead of falſifying their Vows of Faith and Chaſtity, they have moſt carefully and religiouſly obſerv'd them; not made them ſuch requitals as their perjury and falſhood, according to the Maxims of the World, requir'd and call'd for, and would juſtifie, but have been wary to a ſcruple, menag'd themſelves ſo nicely, vertuouſly and well, that they have given them neither ſecret jealouſie within, nor ſhame and infamy abroad, and born their ſenſible and wounding injuries, to the eye of the World, as though they had been treated honeſtly and kindly; a Man muſt be of a horribly hard, inflexible ill-nature, whom ſuch reflection will not ſoften into love and pitty; the remembrance of ſuch kindneſs, and good Qualities, and ſuch a Converſation, is as likely to effect a cure, and to reduce a wandring Husband, as any thing beſides: He will ſee and admire the power of Virtue and Religion, and the huge difference betwixt the choice his virtuous and deliberate love made, and that which his impe-

tuous ſinful paſſion ſince has thrown him on: How frugal, ſerviceable, and creditable, the *one* has been, and how extravagant, expenſive, miſchievous and ſhameful the *other:* How deep a debtor the allurements of one have made him to Gods Juſtice, and to what deſpair and miſery they have reduc'd him, whilſt the prayers and tears and interceſſions of the other, may have preſerv'd him for repentance and forgiveneſs. This may not only fill him with good *Ideas* of Religion, but prove a motive to his Converſion, it may turn his Heart, and bring him to the ways of Goodneſs; he may ſee how reaſonable it is, that *he* ſhould be as faithful to his Vows, and true to his Engagements, for the future, as ſhe has been; and, in a generous and religious gratitude, may ſet about a Reformation, and redeem his paſt miſcarriages by after-conſtancy and kindneſs. Dif. VII.

It is not indeed certain that theſe or any other methods will reclaim a vicious and a faithleſs Husband, but it is certain, that theſe are the moſt likely to do it, and beſt fitted for it; but at leaſt that every Woman is oblig'd to take theſe courſes, whether they prove effectual or no: It is that which they both firſt, and laſt, and all the while, muſt practiſe, and with which

Dif. VII. which no evil, falſe injurious uſage can diſpence; there muſt be no requital in theſe ſinful Inſtances, *ones* ſin will never make excuſe for *anothers*; and 'twere a ſad revenge that would fall at laſt, upon their own Souls. They muſt ſtill perſiſt in the performance of their Duties towards God and Man; if their chaſt and religious Converſation prevail, they have gain'd their point, and prov'd the Inſtruments of the greateſt good in the World, to thoſe they love the beſt, and to whom they owe it moſt: And if they prevail *not*, they have the ſatisfaction of knowing they have done their Duty all the while; and taken the courſes that were likelieſt to effect what they deſired and wanted; they are excuſable both to God and Man, and ſhall not fail of their Reward. Whereas by a light and idle, wanton and ſuſpicious carriage, they do not only give offence to ſober, virtuous People, and great encouragement to vicious impudent Attempters, but do Religion great miſchief, weaken it much in the minds of their ill-diſpos'd Partners, who ſee it has not any of its boaſted power and efficacy, and ſtrangely alienates their affections from them, and hardens them in their unlawful practices: For the moſt deſperately vicious and ungodly Husbands in

the

the World would have their Wives even ſcrupulouſly virtuous, and religious, and make the want of thoſe good qualities and graces, pretences for their holding out themſelves againſt them; and therefore Wives are inexcuſable that will not try ſo to reclaim them, eſpecially when 'tis their Duty ſo to do, let the event be what it will. This is the firſt, and greateſt inſtance of that Subjection which every Wife muſt live in to her Husband, and we ſee that it is not without its encouragement, even in this life, namely, the likelyhood of reclaiming him to faithfulneſs and conſtancy, which bring their reward with them. Diſ. VII.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe VIII.

I. Peter iii. Verſes 3, 4.

Whoſe adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.

ST. *Peter* deſigning to make all Women as good Wives and good Chriſtians as they ought to be, layes down this general Rule in the firſt place, that *they muſt be in Subjection to their own Husbands*, the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of which, I have tried to ſhew, 1*ſt*. From the viſible deſign of Nature, which hath denied to *them*, and given to *Men*, the ſtrength and abilities of Body and Mind, which are abſolutely requiſite to carry on the neceſſary buſineſs of the World. 2*dly*. From the Uſages

Uſages and Cuſtoms of the World, at all times, which have rather been to their prejudice than advantage. And 3*ly*, from the many Commands of God to the contrary, in Holy Scriptures: and then he deſcends to particular Injunctions, in order to the ſame good end, of rendring them acceptable to God, and to their Husbands; one, and a very great one, was *to have their Converſation chaſt*, and *coupled with fear*, i. e. not only pure and clean Hearts, but a diſcreet reſervedneſs and modeſt carriage outwardly, a careful nice regard to fame and good report, ſuch a ſober virtuous and prudent menagement, as will denote the fear of God within, and that the mind is govern'd by good principles, and influenc'd by the Laws of Chriſtianity; ſo that they who behold this chaſt and good Converſation, ſhall glorifie God; and the Husband, if there be need, ſhall be won and gain'd upon, by it, to the converſion of his Soul, the reformation of his Manners, and increaſe of Virtue. He is now proceeding to lay down other Rules and Inſtructions, ſuch as will very much forward his deſign of making the Women good Wives, and good Chriſtians. *Firſt*, negatively, by ſhewing them, that the ways of the World, were not ſuch as he would advize, or Dif. VIII.

Dif. VIII. thought fit either to commend them to God or their Husbands. *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel:* But *Secondly*, affirmatively, he shews them what it *is*, he would advize, and why. *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.* I am *first* to speak to his advice, which is negative, relating to the outward adorning of the Body, and it is very near the same with what St. *Paul* delivers, 1 Tim. 2. Verses 9, 10. *In like manner also, that Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array, but (which becometh Women professing godliness) with good works.* Saint *Chrysostom* understands these words, as if St. *Paul* were directing the Women how to appear in publick, when they came to Church, and not to be giving any Rules of habiting themselves in general, and therefore he enlarges on them, in this manner. *Do you* (saith he) *come to pray to God, cloathed in Gold and with Embroideries? Are you not rather come to Dance, or to make up the number at a Wedding, or to see some fine Sight?*

There

There your Gold, there your Embroideries, Dif. VIII.
there your plaited Hair, and there your coſtly Apparel may be ſeaſonable. But here at Church there is no need or uſe of any ſuch things: You are come hither to intreat and ſupplicate for pardon of your Sins, and intercede for your Offences, to addreſs to God, and render him propitious to you, and do you then adorn your ſelf? Are theſe the tokens, this the habit of a Supplicant? How can you ſigh, or weep, or pray, with fervency whilſt thus arrayed? It will but look like acting and hypocriſie, for ſuch attire and ſorrow ſuit but ill together. With a great deal more to the like purpoſe, ſuited very well to the Cuſtoms of his own times, and, it may be, to the *Lent-ſeaſon*, in particular. But ſince the uſages of Chriſtian Countries have long while been otherwiſe, and that putting on the beſt Apparel, was deſign'd to do ſome honour to the Lords Day, and that it might be obſerv'd with all the *external* tokens of reſpect, as well as with the *internal* honour and eſteem and worſhip of the mind; it is not only as lawful to be cloath'd with the moſt ornamental attire on this, as on any other day, but it would be an idle, weak, perverſeneſs, to change or oppoſe the Cuſtom. And whatever St. *Pauls* advice might refer to, there is no reaſon to think St. *Peter*,

Dis. VIII. *ter*, in the words of the Text, had any eye to the Womens habiting themselves particularly on *Sundays*, or at the publick service of God, otherwise than on other days, in other places.

But because these two, are the only remarkable passages in the New Testament, that say any thing concerning the Habit of Christian Women, and upon which, *they* who amongst us affect a notorious plainness and simplicity of Apparel, ground and approve their practice, and may be tempted to condemn the rest of the World of pride and sinful vanity, and of living in contradiction to the advice of St. *Paul*, and St. *Peter*, in the Text; it may not be amiss to joyn them together, in considering this matter; and to shew, *first*, what is *not* the meaning of them, and *secondly*, what *is*.

First, what is *not* to be understood by these words: And that is, that neither St. *Peter*, nor St. *Paul* are to be understood in the gross and literal sense, as utterly forbidding the Women to wear any Gold about them, either in Ear-rings, or about their Cloaths, either in Lace, or interwoven or embroidered; and all plaiting of Hair; all Pearls and Jewels, Necklaces, or Bracelets, and all sorts of Cloaths either Linnen, Silk, or Woollen, that come to

a

a great deal of Money, and are *coſtly*; they are not, to be underſtood in the ſtrict and literal ſenſe, for theſe Reaſons; *firſt* the nature of the thing requires it not; nor *ſecondly*, the way and manner of expreſſion: Nor *thirdly*, the end and deſign of the Apoſtles; and yet, the Patrons of this great ſimplicity of Habit, whilſt they ground their practice and opinion of its neceſſity, upon theſe ſingle paſſages, taken in the literal ſenſe, will not be able to excuſe themſelves from contradicting the Apoſtles, if either the Linnen, Silk, or Woollen, which they wear, coſt conſiderably; for they are as much forbidden *coſtly Apparel*, as Gold, and Pearls, and broidering of the Hair, by theſe Apoſtles. And fine Linnen and fine Woollen are equally *coſtly* with relation *to*, and in compariſon *of*, courſe Linnen and courſe Woollen, as Gold and Pearls are with relation to fine Linnen and fine Woollen, in their ſeveral degrees. Dif. VIII.

Not that theſe People are blameable in any wiſe, for this their plainneſs of attire, (for Men and Women are entirely at their liberty to habit themſelves as plainly as they pleaſe) but that they ought not to ground the *neceſſity* of doing ſo, upon theſe Texts; and much leſs ought they to accuſe and *condemn* of pride and ſinful va-

Diſ. VIII. nity, ſuch as go, to appearance, in more gay and coſtly cloathing; if they avoid theſe two offences, the neceſſity of going ſo plain themſelves ariſing from the Scriptures, and the condemning of others who do not ſo attire themſelves, they may do as they ſee fit, in this matter; and tho' the miſtaking theſe Scriptures will, of it ſelf, do them no harm, yet the cenſuring other People *will*; and that does ſo eaſily follow from miſtaking the Scriptures, that it were better they would throughly conſider them; and then they would find that neither they themſelves *do*, nor any elſe *can*, conform in practice to the literal ſenſe of the words of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*.

But ſince I am not ſpeaking, to *them*, but to ſuch as underſtand them better, and yet (I hope) are full as good Wives, and much truer Chriſtians; I will now go on, to ſhew, that theſe Advices and Inſtructions are not to be literally underſtood. And *firſt*, the nature of the thing requires it not; no body can diſcern any greater danger and malignance in Gold and coſtly Apparel, than in any other Mettal, other Stones, or coarſer Garments. Whether it be, the wiſdom, or folly, or the fancy of People that has ſet a greater value on theſe things than on others, is no matter,

matter, there is certainly no greater *evil* in one than another; they are all, in their own natures, alike innocent; and tho' they prove ſometimes the *occaſions* of great miſchiefs, yet they are never properly the *cauſes* of them; but the Paſſions and Deſires of People towards them, who, to compaſs them, will take courſes which muſt conſequently produce miſchievous effects. They are, in this caſe, not unlike to good Countries that border on the Kingdoms of two mighty Princes, who finding their convenience, fall to wars about them, although the Countries gave no provocation or encouragement to either. If the weight, or luſtre, or their rarity, give theſe things any extraordinary excellence, above others, the delight and pleaſure People take therein, is but reaſonable; and whatever evils follow thence, are by no means chargeable upon thoſe inanimate things themſelves, but on the Men that cauſe them: And theſe things naturally are no worſe than light and luſtre in the Sun, ſhape and comlineſs in a Tree, or beauty, fragrance, and variety of form and colour, in the Flowers and Herbs; they are all of them Gods Creatures, and conſequently good. Diſ. VIII.

But ſuppoſing they acquire their value and eſteem from the opinion of the World,

Dif. VIII. and Peoples fancies, and that this be ill-grounded and run out into a blameable exceſs, yet 'tis not reaſonable to think that they are all of them abſolutely prohibited, becauſe Men entertain falſe notions of, and are deceived, in them: For, *firſt*, Men have as much true reaſon to value *theſe*, as any other material things whatever: If we can judge of beauty or of uſefulneſs, they are as uſeful and as beautiful, as any other parts of Gods Creation. But whatever they are in themſelves, and however Men may be miſtaken in their judgments of them, yet as the World was formerly, is now, and always will be, ordered, it is abſolutely neceſſary that ſome things ſhould be accounted of greater excellence and value than others; there could be otherwiſe no living in the World, no Trade or Commerce could be entertain'd, without ſuch change and bargain. And if the wiſdom of all the World, in all Ages, has centred in this, that ſuch and ſuch things ſhould be accounted beſt, and valued higheſt, it is a great preſumption that they *are* truly, the moſt excellent and valuable things of the Creation; but 'tis a down right demonſtration, that it is neceſſary to *account* them ſo; and that ſuch opinion is well enough grounded, becauſe 'tis abſolutely neceſſary that ſomething

ſhould

ſhould be reckoned *beſt*, and better than another, and nothing has, at any time prevail'd above theſe things, in civiliz'd Countries. Diſ. VIII.

And though it ſhould be objected, that the *Indians* parted with their Gold and Pearls, for Glaſs and Trifles, to their firſt *Diſcoverers*, yet it would not from thence follow, that what the common eſteem of Mankind makes valuable, is not truly ſo; for though Glaſs and Gold are of equal value to a Man that neither, uſes, nor knows how to make uſe of either, yet to one that does both, they are very unequal: And when the *Indians* knew how much their Traders valued Gold, and what a deal of Glaſs and other gaudy things were purchaſable by a little Gold, they grew wiſer, and learnt the excellency of it; though at the ſame time, we muſt own, that if all the World ſhould ſet a ſtamp of value, upon Glaſs, or any thing beſides, it muſt be as valuable as Gold it ſelf; which ſhews that theſe things are not here forbidden by St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*, either becauſe they are worthleſs in their own nature, or becauſe *we* have ſet too great a value on them: They are as good and innocent as any other things, and therefore there is nothing in the nature of them, from whence we may conclude they are abſolutely prohibited.

Dif. VIII. Nor *Secondly*, from the way and manner of expreſſion here us'd, although it ſeem to be abſolutely negative; for ſo it is, in a world of places in the Scriptures. So Matth. 6. 19. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon the Earth, where Moth and Ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal, but lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven.* Here though the expreſſion be very poſitive, or abſolutely negative, yet the meaning of theſe words, is not abſolutely to prohibit People the laying up treaſures here on Earth, for the neceſſities and duties of life do make it unavoidable; there can be no proviſion made for Families and Children, without ſuch treaſuring, there can be no ſuch thing as Stock, or Subſtance, no ſuch thing as Trade and Commerce, unleſs ſome People do it, to be ready at an exigence; and unleſs we can imagine Chriſt intended to forbid the Merchandiſe and Traffick of the World, or the Proviſion for Families and Relations, we muſt not think he abſolutely prohibited the laying up Treaſures here on Earth, although the Injunction be expreſſed, in very abſolute and poſitive terms. But the meaning is, that Chriſtians ſhould be more intent upon the ſecuring everlaſting Happineſs to themſelves, than the ſhort and periſhable Riches

Riches of this World: That they ſhould not lay out ſo much time and care and pains in gathering Treaſures here, that are ſubject to ſo many changes, and of which they can at beſt be Maſters but a very little time, to the neglect of Heavenly things, in whoſe poſſeſſion there is not only everlaſting Happineſs, but in whoſe loſs there is eternal Miſery; there is no manner of compariſon betwixt theſe two Treaſures, and therefore lay not up the one, until you have ſecur'd the other; and ſo St. Matth. 9. 13. *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, which being ſpoken by God under the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, cannot be underſtood of Gods abſolutely refuſing and diſliking Sacrifices, which he himſelf ſo frequently commanded in the Law of *Moſes*, to be offered conſtantly and ſolemnly before, and to him; but the meaning is, I will have Mercy *rather* than Sacrifice, if they ſhould come in competition. I will not be defrauded of one, under pretence of the other, I'le have them both in their proper Seaſons; but ſhould there be an occaſion of preference, the ſhewing Mercy is more agreeable to Me than Sacrifice; I like the fulfilling that Command of mine, which does an act of Love and Kindneſs to another, better than fulfilling that Command which only ſhews Dif. VIII.

Dif. VIII. ſhews an inſtance of Obedience to me, and has no other good belonging to it; and ſo it is in Hoſea 6. 6. from whence it is taken, *I deſired Mercy, not Sacrifice, and the knowledge of God, more than Burnt-offerings*, where *not* in the firſt place, is explain'd by *more* in the *ſecond*. And ſo our Saviour underſtands it in the Application, for *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* They had objected to him his eating and converſing with Publicans and Sinners, and he tells them that his chief deſign was to convert all ſuch from the evil of their ways, that his errand was rather to them than others, they wanted his aſſiſtance moſt, and therefore they ſhould have it; not but that he came to call thoſe he names Righteous, as well as thoſe whom they call'd Sinners, for there were no ſuch People as Righteous, for all Men wanted him, and all Men muſt come to him by Repentance, but the more the Sins, the more the Sinners wanted him. So Matth. 10 28. *Fear not them, which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* It is impoſſible *not* to fear ſuch as can kill the Body; but we muſt not fear the one in compariſon with the other, who can make us miſerable for ever. So Luke 12. 29. *Seek ye not what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink*, which is impoſſible

ble to be understood positively, by at least three quarters of the World, who must neither eat, nor drink at all, unless they seek it, and seek it in earnest too, with toil and great pains: But the meaning is, they must not seek the things of this life with more anxiety than they are worth, but rather seek the Kingdom of God. So 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. St. *Paul* says, *the Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children*; which must not be understood generally and without reserve; for in many cases Children are unquestionably obliged to lay up for the Parents, where they are quite disabled by Age, or feebleness, or other cause, from taking care of themselves. The meaning is, it is more usual and more natural for Parents to provide for Children, than the contrary, and not at all to forbid it, where 'tis necessary, decent, or convenient. So Prov. 20. 13. and 23. 4. *Love not Sleep*; *Labour not to be Rich*, i. e. do nothing of that kind excessively; do all things moderately; shew your self a diligent and careful Man, but be not a slave to ease and idleness, nor yet to labour and extream pains for the perishing goods of this World. And so, *lastly*, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World.* This is a very absolute injunction in Dis. VIII.

Dis. VIII. in words, but altogether impossible to be practis'd in the literal and first sense of them, for Men cannot help loving themselves and several other things that are in the World; but the meaning is, that Men must not love any thing in this World, comparatively with God, *i. e.* so as not to part with it, if he commands us; so as not to prefer our Obedience and the Duty we owe to him, before all other Worldly things besides, though never so useful and advantageous, never so delightful to us. So that from all these passages, which I have taken occasion to explain, and from many others I omit, it appears that tho' a Prohibition or Command may be expres'd in general and very positive terms, yet it is not always so to be understood, without exception and reserve: There is a sense of Reason and Equity to be enquired after, which the Circumstances of Time, and Place, and Person, must determine.

And if there be any one general Rule to know when this Negative particle *not* is to be universally exclusive of all degrees whatever, belonging to the thing prohibited, it may perchance be this, where-ever the things prohibited are naturally and in themselves unlawful. So Rom. 13. 13. *Not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in*

in Strife and Envyings. Here the things Dis. VIII.
are in themſelves unlawful and abomina-
ble, and therefore there is no exception
to be made; no degree of them is lawful
or to be admitted, they are all, and every
of them, ſtark naught, and therefore cer-
tainly prohibited in general, and without
reſerve. But where the matter of the prohi-
bition is in its own nature innocent, and
perfectly indifferent, and becomes prohi-
bited becauſe of ſome abuſe of it, there
though the words of the prohibition be
general, yet the thing can be no farther
underſtood to be prohibited than it is
abus'd, or as far as may guard it from a-
buſe. So though St. *Peter*, and St. *Paul*,
prohibited Women pleated or broidered
Hair, and Gold and Pearls, and coſtly Ar-
ray, yet are they not neceſſarily to be un-
derſtood to prohibit them the uſe and or-
nament of any of thoſe things in general,
though the Injunction be expreſs'd in very
poſitive terms, becauſe there is nothing,
in their natures, evil, but what is evil is
by abuſe, and accidentally become ſo,
and becauſe we have ſeen a great many
places of Scriptures expreſt as generally
and abſolutely as theſe, and yet to bear
exceptions and reſerves and a more limit-
ed ſenſe.

Diſc. VIII. Nor, *thirdly*, is it abſolutely neceſſary that all theſe things ſhould abſolutely be forbidden, from the deſign and purpoſe of theſe two Saints and Apoſtles, which ſeems to be *principally* the recommending ſuch things to the Women as would make them good Wives and good Chriſtians, *Good Works*, and ſuch as became People profeſſing Chriſtianity (as we ſhall ſee in due time) and *ſecondarily* ſuch decent, grave, external Habit, as would anſwer and become thoſe Good Works; but ſuch eſpecially as would give no Scandal and Offence, nor miniſter temptations to another. Now ſuch deſign is no way obſtructed by a moderate and well regulated uſe, of all or any of theſe Ornaments; and therefore there is neither need, nor reaſon to conclude that all or any of theſe particulars here mentioned, are univerſally abſolutely forbidden to Women, either from the nature of the things themſelves, or from the way and manner of expreſſion, or laſtly from the end propos'd both by St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*; all theſe are ſecur'd although the words be taken in a laxer, and more moderate ſenſe.

But though it may be reaſonable enough, to think theſe words of both Apoſtles (which I joyn together becauſe they are ſo liked to, and explain, one another)

are

are not to be understood literally and strictly, yet something is undoubtedly forbidden thereby, and what that is, it may be fit to know, which was the *second thing*, I intended to consider; after having shewn what should *not* be understood by these negative instructions concerning outward Ornaments and Habits. Dis. VIII.

And *first* we may reasonably conclude that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* would be understood to forbid all such gaiety and costliness of Attire as certainly minister to Pride, and foster Vanity. There is no body doubts but every thing sinful, and tending to Gods dishonour is here prohibited, and if either Newness, Rarity, and Costliness of Habit, occasion Pride and Vanity, it is certainly here condemn'd. The truth of it is, it seems difficult to conceive, what kind of Pride it is, that can be rais'd in Peoples minds on these accounts, how they can come to think more highly of themselves than others, and than they ought to do, because they have other Cloaths, and are otherwise dress't than *they* are. But whatever it is, 'tis evident that the Effect, and not the Cause is here prohibited, since the Cause is every thing, by which the fancy is blown up; and it is not only Gold and Pearls, and costly Apparel, that occasion this disordered fancy,

Dis. VIII. cy, and this foolish vanity of Heart, but any thing that People put a value and esteem upon, and think it raises them above their Neighbours: For it is not the richness of a thing that is always the ground of its esteem: If a thing of lesser price, be more fashionable, 'tis more desir'd and more valued by the Wearer; and if *loose and flowing Hair* were modish, it would then occasion more Pride and Vanity, than the pleating or the broidering it would do. This is so well known to all, that I need not insist upon it, that the things that cost most, do not please best, if they be not also fashionable; and if they do not please, and are not fashionable, they are not so apt to create that secret vain complacence in the Mind, which arises from the conceit that what they wear, becomes them best, and sets them in a rank above their Neighbour. So that 'tis manifest, this kind of pride, whatever 'tis, is not grounded upon costliness or worth, but upon decency and modishness, so that People would be proud of Toyes and Tinsel, Straws and Rushes, if the Court and City brought them into fashion, and would use them publickly. And since 'tis pride and haughtiness, and vain conceits of mind which the Scriptures intend to forbid and check, 'tis manifest that Gold and

and Pearls, and coſtly Array, and plaited Hair are not the things particularly ſpoken againſt, any farther than they prove the occaſions of that Pride and Vanity. And ſince other meaner things, if faſhionable and in uſe, occaſion them as commonly and certainly as the more coſtly things; and that ſomething or other muſt be us'd and faſhionable, it follows very near demonſtrably, that Pride and Vanity are the effects, and things that are prohibited, and neither Gold, nor Pearls, nor broider'd Hair, nor coſtly Attire. Diſc. VIII.

And what is ſaid for the matter and ſubſtance of Attire, is alſo as true for the manner or *faſhion* of it, that no one particular Mode either is, or can poſſibly be forbidden or preſcrib'd, as that which neceſſarily and unavoidably either occaſions or prevents this Pride and Vanity; becauſe it is not this or that particular Faſhion or Dreſs that only occaſions Pride or Vanity, for another Dreſs does the ſame thing when 'tis become the Faſhion: And 'tis a weak thing to imagine, that ſuch a Faſhion is *the proudeſt Faſhion* that ever was, for People are alike proud in *all* Faſhions; and few or none were ever proud of their Attire and Dreſs, if at the ſame time they thought it out of Faſhion, or did not wear it in ſpite and oppoſition to the Faſhion;

Dif. VIII. ſhion; and therefore 'tis reaſonable enough to conclude that what pride ariſes on the account of dreſſing, is owing chiefly to the opinion People have, that what they wear is modiſh and becoming; and therefore all Faſhions are very near alike hazardous, one as the other, and as apt to raiſe the Pride and Vanity of weak and trifling Spirits. If *Faſhion* then, be the moſt obvious and apparent ground of Vanity, and the foundation of this fooliſh Pride, it muſt certainly be reaſonable, if not abſolutely neceſſary, to avoid conformity and compliance with the Faſhion. So one would think indeed, at firſt; but when you come to conſider it, it is otherwiſe, and would ſignifie nothing at all; for what is abſolutely neceſſary to *ſome*, upon this account, is as neceſſary to all; for if *one* muſt not be proud and vain, neither muſt *another* be ſo; and if *one* muſt avoid the common and the ordinary occaſion, ſo muſt another, and ſo muſt all. But now it is impoſſible for all to avoid the Faſhion, for if all avoid it, how could any thing be the Faſhion? And that which all or moſt agree in, and conſent to, will be neceſſarily the Faſhion; ſo that all Peoples avoiding the Faſhion, would be only ſetting up another Faſhion, if they all agreed or fell into one and the ſame; or leaving every one

one to their own devices and imaginati- Dis. VIII.
ons; which would occaſion as much (and 'tis probable a great deal more of) pride than their all agreeing in *one*. Upon the whole matter, the conſent in general of moſt Wearers makes a Dreſs or Habit faſhionable, and when that has once prevail'd, it unavoidably becomes the Standard and Meaſure of Decency: And when we think a Faſhion aukard or unbecoming, it is becauſe we have not long enough been us'd to it, or do not find it generally approv'd, or becauſe it has long been laid aſide; but to think it *ſinful*, to follow a Faſhion becauſe new, and conform to Cuſtom in theſe caſes, is, to ſet up our own imaginations againſt the whole Worlds, not only of our own time, but of all foregoing Generations, whoſe Modes and Garbes have all along been very different; and though ſome appear more antick and extravagant than others, yet that proceeds rather from a fondneſs, for our own conceits and cuſtoms, and a liking to what we have been us'd to, in our own Nations and times, than from any true grounds in Nature or in Reaſon. But to conclude that one Faſhion is more proud and ſinful than another, argues ſome ſort of weakneſs of judgment, or want of conſideration. Not that ſome ſort of Faſhions do not

Dif. VIII. miniſter more to wantonneſs and immodeſty than others, and take up much more time, and hinder People from doing the good they would otherwiſe do (which I ſhall afterwards conſider) but that one Faſhion is prouder than another, is not at all evident, though it is commonly thought ſo.

It is not for *Us*, to appear as Advocates for any of theſe matters; but when things are generally decried, without any Reaſon or good Foundation, even good and honeſt People come to be ſcandaliz'd at they know not what, nor why: And ſcruples are begotten in ſome weak minds, which they cannot afterwards get eaſily rid of; and when ſome have miſtaken themſelves into a compliance with the literal ſenſe of theſe Injunctions, they fall (as I ſaid) into an uncharitable cenſoriouſneſs of ſuch as are not like minded. Till therefore People can diſcover, the unreaſonableneſs, or the unlawfulneſs of complying with the Cuſtoms of the times which are not in themſelves ſinful, or till they can diſcover a better Standard of decency than the general conſent of People, I ſee no reaſon to judge otherwiſe, than that the common and accuſtom'd Garb and Attire is innocent and ſafe. It may indeed become the occaſion of Peoples

Pride

Pride and Vanity, but so may any thing besides; and therefore when People find themselves exalted by such trifles, and cur'd by their removal, they are oblig'd to leave, and change them presently: For even the best endowments both of Body and Mind, are no sufficient plea, or reasonable excuse, for an extraordinary conceit of our selves, or for contempt of others; and much less any vain and gay Attire, that is truly none of ours, but borrowed from the Earth and Sea, and Birds and Beasts, and little ugly Insects, and only serve to cover and conceal our Imperfections and Deformities. Dis. VIII.

And truly, Virtue and good Qualities must needs run very low, when People seek for Honour and Esteem, from such poor vanities as these; and *scorn*, and injure too perhaps, their Neighbours, for the want of them, of which if they had but little more, they would *envy* them, and if a great deal, *hate* them down-right. Not that every act of complacence in Apparel, or every thought that such and such a thing becomes them better than another, and liking it, on that account, is therefore a Sin, or sinful, but the excess of such complacence, and the setting a greater esteem upon themselves, and a less on others than is due upon these simple ac-

Dif. VIII. compts, which elate the Hearts of fooliſh Creatures with idle Fancies, vain Imaginations, and conceits of Dignity and Honour, and withdraw them from more grave and ſerious Objects, on which they might and ſhould be better employed. It appears therefore from the whole, that the Apoſtles do not deſign to forbid to Women altogether the uſe of Gold, or Pearls, or coſtly Attire, the broidering or the plaiting of the Hair, neither from the nature of things themſelves, which are not evil, but indifferent, and either innocent or evil as they are us'd; nor from the manner of expreſſion, though it look like negative and univerſal, ſince a great many other paſſages are full as abſolute and univerſal, that yet muſt needs be taken in a reſtrain'd and equitable ſenſe; nor *laſtly*, from their main deſign, which is to let the Women know, what are the trueſt Ornaments and Honours of their Sex, good Qualities, and good Works; and that their firſt and principal care ſhould be, to ſecure that main point, which will recommend them both to God and Man, and make them uſeful in their Generations; that whatever value and eſteem, the idle and the inconſiderate part of Mankind may have put upon Attire and Dreſs, yet that there is no true worth in any ſuch appear-

appearances: That it is indeed become ne- Diſc. VIII.
ceſſary, to do as is commonly done, but
that the Commendation that ariſes thence,
is not at all deſirable, or any ways bene-
ficial; and that of all things in the World,
they have the leaſt reaſon, to be proud
and vain on theſe accounts, ſince even the
Beauty and the Comlineſs they aim at in
theſe Dreſſes, (if they ſhould really attain
it) were no ſuch mighty prize; a ſickly
Creature of the fancy, born and nouriſh'd
unaccountably, and loſt by humour or a
thouſand accidents.

The firſt thing therefore that is meant,
is, that no one ſhould be proud of their
Apparel, and that whoever finds her ſelf
exalted to undue and unuſual conceits of
her own worth, or inclin'd thereby to
ſcorn, and to deſpiſe another, becauſe not
clad ſo well, or richly as her ſelf, offends
againſt the Apoſtles Rules, and is oblig'd
to Repentance, and to make the experi-
ment whether a meaner Garb, and other
Dreſs, will not abate her haughtineſs, and
cloath her with Good-nature and Humili-
ty, and other ſuch good Qualities and
Graces, as become thoſe who profeſs God-
lineſs. What is farther underſtood to be
prohibited the Women, in the Apoſtles
Rules, and what moreover are the things
here recommended to them, in order to

Diſc. VIII. their pleaſing God, and thoſe they are obliged to pleaſe of Men, will require ſome other opportunity, to ſpeak to; in the mean time let them remember, that the buſineſs of Apparel, is not ſo inconſiderable, but that the Apoſtle, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, thought convenient to give their Advice and Rules concerning it, when they were treating of the Duty of Wives to their Husbands, which is the deſign I have now in hand, and ſhall proſecute in the following Diſcourſes.

Diſcourſe IX.

1 Peter iii. Verſes 3, 4.

Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the ſight of God, of great price.

HAving ſhewn already, both from the nature of the things themſelves, and from the way and manner of expreſſion, and the deſign both of St. *Peter* here, and of St. *Paul* in 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. that Women neither were, nor well could be, abſolutely forbidden the Uſe and Ornament of all the particular things mentioned by them, but that they were left indifferent to People, and to be regulated by them, as they ſhould ſee convenient, both as to the Matter and Manner, to Subſtance and

to

Diſ. IX. to Faſhion, by Prudence and Diſcretion, ſo as never to become, by either deſign or natural neceſſity, the inſtruments or occaſions of Sin; I had only time (in ſpeaking to the *ſecond* Head, which was to ſhew, what *was* to be underſtood by theſe Rules of both Apoſtles concerning Ornament and Habit, I had only time) to mention one particular, and that was, that they were undoubtedly forbidden the being Proud and Vain, and Self-conceited, and the deſpiſing, and the treating others injuriouſly, upon the account of Cloaths, and Dreſs. I am now to proceed to other particulars, which we may reaſonably preſume the Apoſtles intend to prohibit to Chriſtian Women, and good Wives.

In the *ſecond* place, therefore, all ſuch Attire as ſerves to *Looſeneſs and Immodeſty*, is here forbidden; and this, not only if it be *deſign'd* to ſerve ſuch wicked Purpoſes, but alſo if it have a natural, an eaſie, or an uſual tendency that way. *Firſt*, to be ſure it is forbidden, if deſign'd to ſuch an evil purpoſe, becauſe the deſign it ſelf is ſo abominable, the heating of the fancies, and inflaming the Hearts of heedleſs and impetuous Youth, and kindling and exciting thoſe impure deſires, that will, at laſt conſume both Soul and Body. To dreſs with this deſign is, to be ſure, not only *blameable*,

able, but *damnable*, without Repentance; 'tis the *worſt* they can do, and *all* they can do, for nothing is wanting on their ſide, to compleat the Sin. And as the deſign's taking effect does not at all depend on them, ſo neither will its miſſing its effect excuſe them, or diminiſh ought of either Guilt or Puniſhment. Dif. IX.

But what ſhall be determin'd of them who do not dreſs with this abominable purpoſe, but only with deſign of appearing gracious and lovely in the ſight of People, and to gain Affection and Goodwill? Why, the Rule in general may be this, that the deſigning any thing in Mind and Wiſh, is more or leſs innocent, according as the thing deſign'd is more or leſs innocent in it ſelf, and would be, ſhould it take effect; ſo that if to appear gracious and lovely, be in it ſelf good, or bad, or indifferent, the deſigning to appear ſo (whether it take effect or no) will be good, or bad, or indifferent, accordingly. And therefore whoever would know how far ſhe may innocently dreſs with this deſign, muſt ask her ſelf what ſhe intends, what ſhe deſires that Grace and Comlineſs for, and what uſe ſhe deſigns to make of Peoples Approbation, or their Admiration of her; and according as that is better or worſe, ſo will her dreſſing and adorning

Dif. IX. adorning of her ſelf be more or leſs innocent.

Some of the Ancients (*S. Cl.* of *Alex. l.* 3. 11. *Tertul. de Cult. Fam.* 2. 4.) ſeem to allow the Wives a greater liberty in dreſſing, than to other ſingle People; but they ſay it ſhould be only where 'tis fairly probable at leaſt, that the Affections of the Husbands cannot otherwiſe be eaſily retain'd; but they do at the ſame time reproach the folly and the lightneſs of thoſe Men, who conſidered ſuch Appearances more than the true and only Ornaments, the Virtues and good Qualities of Women; and they reſtrain the Wives appearing handſomer than ordinary, to the Huſbands only; which may indeed be done in the deſign, but not as to the effects which will have influence upon other People alſo. But though there may be ſomething of reaſon, in ſatisfying ſome deſires, yet it cannot be a Rule of any great Security or Prudence, becauſe ſome Husbands may be light, and wanton, and fantaſtical themſelves, and their fancies prove but weak and ſimple Guides: and though they ſhould be permitted to take a greater liberty with reſpect to their Husbands, and the pleaſing them, yet becauſe they live and converſe with other People, they are prohibited (as well as other Women) ſuch

ſuch Dreſs, as, though they ſhould deſign to hurt or pleaſe no body at all; yet may have in it ſelf a natural, eaſie, or an uſual tendency to evil, and miniſter temptations to another. Diſ. IX.

It is preſum'd that all Men act upon ſome grounds, and that our Reaſon and other Faculties are given on purpoſe to direct and govern us in all our Actions, and to conſider with them Cauſes and Effects, Actions and Events, Natural, and Neceſſary, Probable and Accidental, ſuch as are like to be, and ſuch as may poſſibly be; and from theſe Abilities of conſidering, judging and determining, ariſes the guilt and condemnation of precipitancy, heedleſſneſs, and acting inconſiderately. And as a Man is pitied reaſonably, that falls into Misfortunes which he could not poſſibly foreſee, nor poſſibly prevent; but blam'd and condemn'd, that ſuffers what he neither needed, nor ſhould have done: So is a Man or Woman excus'd for what events are accidental and unuſual from their Acts, but blameable and chargeable with ſuch events as might be reaſonably expected, and were both natural and eaſily conſequential of ſuch their Actions, although they thought not on them, or at leaſt deſign'd them not. When Men take the proper, natural and ready

Diſ. IX. ready means to the attaining of an end, and ſuch as could not probably miſcarry, and ſuch as they muſt needs have taken, had they purpoſedly deſign'd that end, it will be ſtill preſum'd that they intended it, whether they *did* or no. And ſo it is in the matter before us, although a Garb or Faſhion ſhould not be at all deſign'd to ſerve to any evil and immodeſt purpoſes, yet if it naturally did ſo, if it were ſuch as eaſily might miniſter Temptations to unwary forward Hearts, to heated and deprav'd Imaginations, and raiſe unclean *Ideas* in the minds of ill-diſpos'd People, it were undoubtedly unlawful: Such Garb and Faſhion muſt unqueſtionably be forſaken: There, neither Multitude, nor Quality, nor Cuſtom could excuſe: There it would be, that *we muſt not follow a Multitude to do evil*; there, no Examples would avail to an excuſe; there it would be to no purpoſe to ſay they deſign'd no Evil, for 'tis not enough not to deſign, but they muſt give no manner of juſt occaſion of it; and though the Parties take not this occaſion as a thing that's *offer'd* them, on purpoſe, yet if it may be eaſily and naturally (according to the wicked Inclinations and Propenſities of People) *taken* and laid hold on, it is to be preſum'd and look'd upon as *given*. 'Tis true indeed that he

he is in fault, and ſhall be puniſhed, that *takes* the bad occaſion not deſign'd to be given, but 'tis alſo true, that ſhe is to be blam'd and ſhall be puniſh'd, that miniſtred ſo proper and ſo eaſie a Temptation. Diſ. IX.

But if the Garb or Dreſs be ſuch as cannot eaſily and naturally tempt, then let the event be what it will, the Party gave it not, and ſo is innocent. The ſhort of the matter in this particular is this, to deſign an evil thing is Sin, although you don't effect it, becauſe you have done all you could; and therefore to dreſs with a deſign of enſnaring weak and ſinful Hearts, and to ſerve immodeſt purpoſes, is moſt undoubtedly a Sin, whatever be the effect: And to effect an evil end *may* be a Sin, although you don't deſign it, becauſe you took the proper and the uſual courſes to effect it, and becauſe the effect depends not on Deſigns and Purpoſes, but upon natural and proper Mediums, and becauſe you knew, or ought to know, that that was very likely to be the effect and conſequence of that your Action.

But, after all, it is not eaſie to determine what kind of Garb and Dreſs does naturally and eaſily, and uſually produce theſe bad effects; for Modeſty and Shame it ſelf, is, in many caſes ſomething relative,

Dif. IX. tive, and depends upon Uſages and Cuſtoms of Places, and the conſent of ſuch a People; and that which is accounted Modeſty in ſome Countries, is lightly regarded in another; and the opinions of the ſame Nation alter by Time and Circumſtances, ſo that People may paſs too haſty and unkind a Cenſure upon theſe occaſions, unleſs they give themſelves leave to conſider: And yet, for all that, the Parties moſt concern'd are not left in ſuch uncertainties, but that they may, if they will ſet about it, gueſs pretty tollerably, and ſafely to be ſure, whereabouts the danger lies, from whence the occaſion of temptation riſes; and are, according to their knowledge, and the beſt of their gueſs, oblig'd to remove the occaſion, to ſtop thoſe fatal inlets of temptations whatſoever they be; or elſe they will moſt certainly offend againſt the Apoſtles Rules, which do at leaſt forbid ſuch Garb and Dreſs to Chriſtian Women, as either naturally or deſignedly ſerve to immodeſty and looſeneſs in themſelves, or miniſter temptations to another.

Thirdly, all ſuch Attire and Dreſs as ſpends and takes up too much time, may reaſonably be preſum'd to be forbidden, becauſe our time is given to better purpoſes; it is not properly ſpeaking, our own, but

but ſo much is to be expended on things absolutely neceſſary, and ſo much on things profitable and convenient for us, and none at all on things hurtful. Diſ. IX.

The Conſideration of the great Work that every one has to do, of the uncertain continuance of the time we have to do it in, of the Diverſions and Impediments we daily meet with, from the neceſſary Buſineſs, the Corruptions of our Hearts, and the Temptations of this World, have wrought ſo powerfully and deeply on the Hearts of many People in all Ages, that they have quite abandon'd all the World, ſequeſter'd themſelves from all Company, and Buſineſs, and given themſelves entirely up to God, devoting themſelves to Prayers and Praiſes, and Repentance. Now as many of theſe People are not over-haſtily to be condemn'd, ſo neither are they over-haſtily to be imitated, for it hath pleaſed God to make the Duties and the Buſineſſes of Life, the Inſtances of our Obedience, and whilſt we are diſcharging them, with Care and Honeſty, we are truly ſerving God, and fulfilling his Commands. And when People fly from the Affairs of the World to Solitude and Contemplation only, they only ſhew that their opinion is, that the *Theory* of Virtue is equal to the *Practice* of it,

Diſ. IX. which is certainly a miſtake; and though there may be more pleaſure to ones ſelf in Speculation, than in Action, yet certainly the exerciſe of Virtues is much more beneficial to the reſt of Mankind, and better anſwers all the purpoſes of Religion, which are, to honour God, and profit one another.

The uſe that I would make of this Conſideration is, that the more thoughtful and conſidering People are, the mighty and momentous work of their Salvation, will the more be laid to Heart; and the leſs time they will be ſure to ſpend in trifling and in needleſs matters; and though, it may be, all the Art and Skill of Man cannot lay down certain general or particular Rules, how much time is abſolutely neceſſary for the diſcharging ſuch a Duty, and how much may ſafely and innocently be beſtowed on ſuch and ſuch purpoſes, what is ſufficient for diverſion and relaxing of the Mind, and when leiſure becomes Criminal; though it be impoſſible to determine with exactneſs in any of theſe particulars for another, yet it is not ſo hard for any one, that is but tollerably careful and inclinable, to do it, in their own caſe; and yet they ſhould not uſe too great exactneſs and nicety in weighing theſe matters, ſince there is no need, and ſcruples may too

too eaſily ariſe, which are of great trou- Diſ. IX.
ble, and no uſe. Let People conſider that they have much to do, and that is abſolutely neceſſary to be done, and much that is more conſiderable than this they are about, and that too little time expended on adorning and ſetting out themſelves, is much more tollerable and ſafe, than too much, and they will want no great advice in theſe caſes, nor much offend by ſuch a negligence: They muſt needs determine for themſelves in all theſe matters, and they may do it ſafely on the better ſide, to be ſure; ſo that the Rule in this caſe, is both ſhort and eaſie. It is unlawful certainly to beſtow that time on dreſſing and adorning ones ſelf, that is due to God and Religion, that ſhould be ſpent in worſhipping and ſerving him, and that is given on purpoſe to us, to ſecure our everlaſting intereſt with him: or that which is owing to our Neighbours, our Relations, or our ſelves, in the ſeveral ſtates of Life, and in the different reſpects we have to them all. So that not only the time that is taken from God, but from any one elſe, we are oblig'd to ſerve and care for, is miſ-ſpent and ill beſtowed, on theſe unprofitable Exerciſes. And though a Woman may be conſtant in her Prayers, and Reading, or what other Spiritual Exerci-

Diſ. IX. ſes ſhe may be put upon, yet it is not enough, if ſhe employ thoſe Hours on tricking and adorning her ſelf, that are due to the diſcharge of the Office of a good Wife, or Parent, or the Miſtreſs of a Family. For theſe are all of them *Duties*, and muſt be paid, and will not be excus'd, whereas the other might be better ſpar'd; it is not only an imprudence, but a faulty neglect in any Woman, to give that time to Idleneſs and Vanity, and dreſſing up her ſelf, which might and ought to be employed in looking after the concerns of her Husband and Family, her Children and her Servants, which is the end and buſineſs of her Relation, as a Wife.

Fourthly, We may reaſonably preſume, that both St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* forbid, ſuch dreſs as by its coſtlineſs prevents and hinders People from doing that good which they might otherwiſe do, by Charity, in its ſeveral Inſtances: Not that whatever Money is expended on things that are only pleaſant and delightful, is ill ſpent, or ought to have been beſtowed on Charitable Uſes; for that's an Opinion that has neither Truth nor Reaſon in it, for many things that are neither abſolutely neceſſary, nor yet ſo ſtrictly convenient, but that one may well be without them, are yet exceeding lawful, and indifferent

to

to be us'd, or let alone, as People ſee fit. Otherwiſe it would be unlawful to do any thing in the World almoſt but Alms; no one muſt purchaſe any thing but what was abſolutely neceſſary, becauſe the Superfluity might be better employed: And even of things abſolutely neceſſary, no one muſt take the better, when the worſe would ſerve, becauſe the Surpluſage of price might ſerve to Charitable Uſes; and the mind would be perpetually perplext. And ſometimes the innocent and lawful pleaſures of this Life, are in a manner neceſſary to the ſweetning of Mens cares, to the relaxing of their minds, and to the making life it ſelf go down with any tollerable reliſh; but it is the exceſs of any thing of this nature that is blameable, it is the extremity of things that is to be avoided. And in the particular matter before us, it is that exceſſive coſtlineſs of Apparel that diſables People from expending any thing on good Uſes, that ought to be condemn'd. When the Woman carries the fortune of a Family about her, and almoſt labours under the weight and preſſure of her Ornaments, and is really in ſome pain her ſelf, for the fantaſtic and imaginary pleaſure of thinking ſhe is acceptable to another. This muſt needs be blameable, becauſe it is chooſing to do Dif. IX.

Diſ. IX. that, which is, at leaſt, neither neceſſary, nor convenient, nor commanded, before that which is both excellent and neceſſary and their Duty; Such as the doing Acts of Charity, *i. e.* Acts of kindneſs in their ſeveral Relations, and according to their ſeveral Qualities and Abilities; for ſince Charity and doing Good is the very end of Gods beſtowing Riches upon People, and the pretence and ground of their deſiring them, and the beſt and trueſt uſe they can poſſibly make of them, they muſt needs be ſelf-condemn'd, that hinder themſelves from putting Riches, to this good uſe, by laying them out ſo very extravagantly and unprofitably upon themſelves; that to pleaſe a vitiated imagination of their own, and attract the eyes of others, they, in ſome ſenſe, defraud ſo many poor and needy Creatures of the true and ſolid neceſſary comforts of this Life: That ſweep the ground with that, whoſe purchaſe would have cloath'd the Naked, fed the Hungry, ſatisfied the Thirſty, and comforted the Hearts of many Sick, and Priſoners.

I do not chooſe to urge this matter with the many Inſtances and Examples of famous Saints of old, who parted with their Garments, ſold their Ornaments and Jewels, to feed and cloath their Saviour, in

in his needy Servants; for though they Dif. IX.
are glorious Inſtances, burning and ſhining Lights; yet they are rather hung to ſhew where folks *may* go, than to direct them where they *muſt*. Whatever any one does in this kind is unqueſtionably very good, but yet not neceſſarily to be imitated by thoſe that are *not*, nor thoſe that *are* in the ſame Circumſtances; but they may ſerve to ſhew that, certainly, theſe excellent and charitable Chriſtians would have thought it an unpardonable fault, to have beſtowed any exceſſively ſuperfluous coſt upon themſelves, when they thereby ſhould be diſabled from complying with ſo many noble and good-natur'd Precepts of their Lord and Saviour, in behalf of Charity.

Laſtly, We may reaſonably preſume that the Apoſtles intended to forbid, all ſuch coſtlineſs of Apparel as exceeds the Quality and Ability of the Wearer. *Firſt*, becauſe this is an offence againſt *Decency*, that natural and becoming order, which both the wiſdom and the cuſtom of all times and places have agreed upon, as moſt convenient to diſcriminate and difference People one from another, and, in the matter of Quality, to prevent all Diſreſpect, Diſorder and Confuſion. And though an offence of this kind, barely thus

Diſ IX. conſidered, be not a Sin indeed againſt God, yet in wiſe and civiliz'd Nations, this kind of Luxury has more or leſs been frequently reſtrain'd by Penal Laws, which ſhews not only ſome Inconvenience, but ſome kind of Deformity, and natural Indecency to belong to it. But *Secondly*, it frequently occaſions Poverty to the Family, it exhauſts the gain and labour of the Calling moſt unconſcionably, when that which ſhould maintain the Houſe, and keep the Children, and ſupport the Trade and Credit of Men, is trifled off in ſhew and gay Appearance, not only to the ſhame and great diſgrace, but to the ruine (often) of the Husbands. It breaks the Heart of Induſtry to ſee its fruits ſquandred ſo laviſhly away, ſo ſimply and ſo ſoon, by light and wanton fancies: And when Men ſee the end of all their toils ſo near, they are frequently tempted to a careleſs and a deſperate ill-husbandry: Beſides the neceſſity there is of contracting Debts, and entring into new Engagements to ſupport the Vanity, which occaſion them a thouſand miſchiefs, and which are almoſt unavoidable, where People will go beyond their juſt Abilities and proper Qualities. It is impoſſible for any Women to be a good Wife, without conſidering this; 'tis a wrong courſe that People take,

to

to be always thinking on their *Family*, or *Fortune*, and forget their Husbands Quality and Eſtate, by which alone they are to govern themſelves in theſe matters. They call their Marriage, *changing their Condition*; they ſhould remember, among other ſenſes of thoſe words, that they change their Condition for that of their Husband, be it what it will, better or worſe, and ſuit their minds to *that*, and then the reſt will follow as it ſhould. Diſ. IX.

But *Thirdly*, it cannot eaſily be, but that the occaſion of this exceſſive coſtlineſs and gaiety muſt be, at the bottom, Pride. It is very poſſible, and very frequent (I hope) for People to bear as good and humble minds, under the richeſt and moſt coſtly Attire, as under the moſt courſe and mean; and 'tis ſome kind of defence, when People go according to their State and Quality, that they are not therefore proud and haughty; but 'tis almoſt impoſſible, when People will exceed their Quality and Eſtates, to father ſuch a vanity on any thing but Pride; one can't tell where to lay it elſe. And this ſhould be conſidered by all Women as well as Wives, ſince others are as guilty of this extravagance, as they.

Theſe are the things that we may reaſonably preſume, the Apoſtles intended to for-

Diſ. IX. forbid the Chriſtian Women; *Firſt*, all Pride and Vanity, Self-conceit, and Contempt or Scorn of others. *Second*, All ſuch Habits and Faſhions as may (whether deſign'd or no, to do it) ſerve to wanton and immodeſt purpoſes, and prove occaſions of falling. *Thirdly*, All ſuch Dreſſing as conſumes that time that is due to God, their Neighbours, and their ſelves, and hinders them from carefully and ſoberly diſcharging all the Duties that they owe, in their ſeveral Relations, to Husbands, Children and Servants. *Fourthly*, All ſuch coſtlineſs of Habit as diſables them from doing good in their Generations, and from exerciſing ſuch acts of Charity, as they otherwiſe ſhould, and may be would, perform, but cannot through their laviſh and extravagant Expences on themſelves. And *Laſtly*, all ſuch coſtlineſs of Habit as is above their Qualities, and juſt and reaſonable Abilities; ſuch as appears an affectation of greater Wealth and Honour and Superiority than is truly due to them. Theſe are things that no conſidering body can ſuſpect are not forbidden, becauſe with retaining theſe, the Women can neither be good Wives nor good Chriſtians. And they who keep within theſe bounds cannot reaſonably fear offending either in the Matter, or the Manner of their Dreſs.

I

I have only to remark, that the Rules of this or any other thing whatever, tho' never ſo ſtrictly and cautiouſly laid down, will be ſubject to Miſconſtruction and Miſtake, (and conſequently the practice to Miſcarriage) without ſome care and diſcretion in conſidering and applying them: In every one of theſe particulars before-mentioned, there are ſome niceties and difficulties, that if People will not well conſider Things and Circumſtances, they will fall upon, and argue obſtinately, and cenſure confidently and uncharitably. There are Exceptions to be made, and ſome allowances in each particular; for, *Firſt*, that may be accounted pride and haughtineſs, which is, it may be, unhappily the natural Air, and Mien of People; and that may be truly pride in ſome that is but decently aſſuming in another. And *Secondly*, ſome heated and corrupted Hearts may make a Dreſs, which is neither naturally nor deſignedly immodeſt, ſerve to inflame them to impure deſires, and make to themſelves temptations of every thing: And *Thirdly*, ſome Dreſſings on occaſions, which every one cannot know or judge of, may expend more time than others, and more than is ordinarily taken by themſelves, and cauſe them to neglect ſome greater Duty for the preſent, which after-diligence may well repair. And *Fourthly*, There may Diſ. IX.

Diſ. IX. may happen ſome accidental occaſions that may require more coſtly Habits, than is well-conſiſtent, for the preſent, with doing good to others; every thing has its ſeaſon. *Laſtly*, There may be occaſions, where it may be lawful and expedient both, to exceed themſelves in Habits, and forget their Qualities and Stations, which they may afterwards as ſeaſonably remember, and return in ſoberneſs and conſtancy again to themſelves. And therefore People are not to be over-ſcrupulous themſelves in any of theſe matters, nor haſty in their cenſuring another. There are too many things to be conſidered, to determine quickly. One may with much more eaſe acquit or condemn ones ſelf, in all or any of theſe particulars, becauſe we know our ſelves much better, and can frequently recover to our Memory the Principles we go upon, and know their firmneſs or their failings. A little Underſtanding, with a great deal of Sincerity and good Intention, will be able to direct ſufficiently and ſafely in any of theſe matters.

Having therefore ſhewn, in what Senſe theſe words of St. *Peter*, conſider'd with thoſe of St. *Paul*, are *not* to be underſtood; and *Secondly*, in what they *were* moſt probably to be taken, I ſhould now proceed

to

to ſhew, what Ornaments the Apoſtles ad- Diſ. IX.
viſe the Chriſtian Women more eſpecial-
ly to provide and look after, to recom-
mend themſelves to God and to their Huſ-
bands. But becauſe that Subject will take
up more time, than is now left us, to
ſpeak to it, I will, for the preſent, add a
few farther Conſiderations concerning Ha-
bits, and conclude.

And *Firſt*, although theſe Rules are moſt eſpecially directed, and relate, to *Women*, yet are the *Men* alſo concern'd in them, and may offend againſt them; the Reaſon of the Injunctions extends to them, and if they tranſgreſs in any of theſe particulars, no queſtion but they are to blame; and ſo much more than Women, by how much they account themſelves, the more reaſonable and ſuperiour Creatures, of the two: It is true, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* addreſs their Inſtructions to the Women, warning them againſt the weakneſſes and failings that have all along been reckon'd properly their own, and more peculiar to their Sex; but 'tis as true, that they would have thoſe Imperfections cur'd and taken away where-ever they appear'd; and therefore if they miſtake the *Sex*, they are yet right in their Deſign and Purpoſe, and undoubtedly forbid to *Men*, whatever is as reaſonable and fit

Diſ. IX. fit to be forbidden them, as to Women; and therefore Pride and Vanity and Self-conceitedneſs upon the ſcore of Garb and Dreſs, all vicious and looſe Deſigns, all intollerable waſt of Time, all extravagant Expence, and all undecent Habit, unbefitting their Condition and Eſtate, are as much prohibited to Men, as Women, by the Scriptures, and are truly more ſhameful and contemptible in them.

Secondly, All *other* Women are concern'd, as well as *Wives*, in theſe Injunctions; all that are capable of offending againſt Rules, are capable of obſerving them in greater or leſs degree, and are therefore ſo far concern'd in them; and ſince the main deſign of the Apoſtles is to make the Women good Wives and good Chriſtians, the obſervance of their Rules is *ſure* to make them good Chriſtians, and to diſpoſe and fit them to be good Wives, againſt they come to that Eſtate.

'Tis a great reproach to the Wiſdom, Sobriety, and Conſideration of the Men, to ſee the Women reckon themſelves ſo ſure of gaining their deſigns and ends upon them, by the care and little arts they uſe in dreſſing and adorning themſelves. They ſay in effect, theſe wiſe and noble Creatures that are ſo much our Maſters by

by deſign of Nature, Cuſtom, and Gods Commands, and ſo ſuperiour in Abilities of Body and Mind, are yet enſnar'd by little fineries and deceits, and caught by Baits, as ſilly and fallacious, as the ſimpleſt, Birds and Beaſts, and Fiſhes. They ſay a great deal more than this, in truth and in effect, when they put on their fine Attire, with full account of their deſign's ſucceeding; and Men deſerve this ſcornful Impoſition, who look no farther than Appearances, and are govern'd by their Fancies, not their Judgment or Underſtanding. Theſe kind of frauds do commonly come home to their Artificers, and are return'd again to their diſappointment, and ſometimes to their great miſery; for the People that are thus enſnar'd, by theſe poor Arts and Deceits, do oftentimes awake from their deluſive Slumbers, and fall into a ſtrange incurable averſion to ſuch as have ſo cheated them, and uſe them as *Amnon* did abuſed *Tamar*, *whoſe hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he loved her.* The remembrance of their folly engages them in Cruelty and Injuſtice, by which they would revenge their grievous and vexatious diſappointments. This is intollerably wicked on the Mens part, but ſuch miſchiefs happen too often, not to be obſerv'd by

Diſ. IX.

Diſ. IX. by the Women, who might learn from hence, how light and inconſtant that affection is, which is kindled and increaſed by little Shifts and Artifices, and how ſoon it is extinguiſh'd; and into how much Sorrow and Affliction it may throw them.

It is very plain, that the qualities which ſhould recommend People to one another, who are to live always together, ſhould be ſuch as will laſt, and continue with them; not ſuch as pleaſe them only for a little while; but ſuch as will bear deliberation before, and a ſatisfactory Reflection afterwards. The *fancy* is a very Weather-cock, and varies upon every turn, and little accident; and it is too great a Riſque to run, to build the hopes of being happy upon any thing ſo uncertain. The only wiſe way, therefore, is, to make proviſion of ſuch qualifications, as when People are ſober, and in their thinking and conſidering moods, they ſhall earneſtly deſire and value, and know are fit and neceſſary for their purpoſe; ſuch as will not only recommend them, at firſt, to favour and good liking, but ſuch as will alſo keep them in eſteem all their lives long; this is the likelieſt way to make their condition happy; Now theſe good qualifications

tions are not the beautifying and adorning themſelves with Gold and Pearls, and plaited Hair, the dreſſing looſely and immodeſtly, the devoting a world of Time, and moſt of their Eſtate, to the ſetting themſelves out, to all appearance, much above their Fortune and their Qualities. Theſe things will commend them to neither good, nor wiſe, or ſober People; but ſuch good Qualities and Virtues as the Scriptures deſcribe and enjoyn to them, and which will recommend them to the favour both of God and Man. Diſ. IX.

Thirdly and Laſtly, There is ſomething in Habit peculiarly decent, proper and becoming to every Age, as well as Quality, which ought to be obſerv'd. The Cuſtoms of all wiſe and civiliz'd Nations, in conformity to Nature and good Reaſon, have all along made difference betwixt the Habits of old and young People, and ſet a mark of lightneſs upon ſuch as would not ſeem to know when they grew old, though all the World about them knew and ſaw it. This Humour is not, of it ſelf, to be charged as ſinful, but wonderfully vain and weak, againſt the Rules of Reaſon, which enjoyn to all People, as far as can conſiſt with their Conveniency, *whatever things are honeſt, lovely, and of good*

Diſc. IX. *report.* It argues a Mind intent and fix'd too faſt upon the little inconſiderable trifles of this World, and too too little thoughtful of the great momentous matters of the other: The older People grow, the more they ſee the emptineſs and vanity of all the things they heretofore delighted in, and they refuſe them *now*, altho' they us'd them innocently *then*; Age and Experience have convinc'd them, that ſuch things are not entertainments for conſidering Minds: They are glad to excuſe thoſe vain amuſements paſt, with the giddineſs and thoughtleſſneſs of Youth, the Cuſtoms of the Times, and Converſation of the Neighbourhood; but now another Age requires another way of Living: It is time to look a little forward, and think of putting off the Body it ſelf; but before that, all the Mind's corrupt and vain affections, all its follies, weakneſſes, and failings, amongſt which, certainly, the careful and ſollicitous concern for Habit and Attire, may well be reckoned; and therefore for People, well ſtricken in years, to mind theſe ſilly matters, is to forget the Rules of Decency, and to neglect the warning God and Nature give them: And *Laſtly*, to afford ſome little ground to Suſpicion, that they want thoſe

thoſe true and real Ornaments and Beauties, which adorn the Souls, and render moſt agreeable the Converſation of good Women, ſuch as the Apoſtles, we ſhall ſee, deſcribe and recommend in the following Diſcourſe. Diſ. IX.

Diſcourſe X.

I. Peter iii. Verſe 4.

But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the ſight of God, of great Price.

HAving ſpoken at large, to the Negative advice of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, what ſort of Ornaments they would *not* have the Women ſollicitous about; I am now come to their affirmative and poſitive Injunctions, which ſhew with what kind of Ornaments they are *deſirous*, all Chriſtian Women *ſhould* adorn themſelves; *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the ſight of God, of great price*, in ſpeaking to which, I will *firſt* conſider the *Terms* here us'd, and then the *things* intended by them.

By the *hidden Man of the Heart*, is meant, the Heart which is hidden in a Man.

Man. There is mention made in the Scrip- Diſ. X.
tures of *the Old Man*, and *the New*, or re-
newed, *Man*, and of the *New Creature*;
by which are underſtood *the State of Na-
ture*, and *the State of Grace*; a State of
Sin and Corruption, and a State of Rege-
neration, or Renovation of Life, entered
upon by Baptiſm, and continued in, by
leading a Virtuous, Godly and Religious
Life, according to the Laws and Com-
mands of Chriſt, ſo that all baptiz'd Chri-
ſtians, living honeſtly and well, have put
off *the Old Man*, and are become *New
Creatures*, renewed and regenerated by the
Holy Spirit: And may therefore know
their Condition and its Security, altho'
they may not underſtand the meaning of
the terms, *Old* and *New Man*, *Regenerati-
on*, or *Renovation*. A Man is alſo divided
into the *outward* and *inward* Man, in the
Scriptures, which may alſo be taken ſome-
times for the *Old* and the *New* Man; but
more generally for the *Body* and the *Mind*;
for that which outwardly appears, and for
that which is ſecret and undiſcovered;
for that which is open and ſeen, and that
which is hidden; for Actions and Affecti-
ons, for Practices and Principles, the firſt
being attributed to the *Body*, the latter to
the *Mind*; and therefore *the hidden Man
of the Heart*, is the Heart of every one,

Diſ. X. that lies hidden; and this it is, the Apoſtles would have beautified and adorn'd; they would have the *Minds* of Chriſtian Women fill'd with good Principles; their Hearts ſhould be ſtor'd with ſuch good Qualities and Virtues as are truly their Grace and Ornament, and cauſe them to appear as lovely and deſirable, as all exteriour Garb and Dreſs can make their Bodies; and this adorning is to be *in that which is not Corruptible*; Gold, and Pearls, and coſtly rich Apparel are all of them periſhable things; things that corrupt, conſume, and wear away, in time; things that are eaten up with Ruſt, and Moth, ſubject to Thieves and many accidents; the things that ſerve the Body either for Uſe or Ornament, are, like the Body, *Corruptible* and *Waſting*: But the Mind, immaterial and immortal, requires and looks for Ornaments ſuited and proper to it. Amongſt which, one conſiderable one is *a meek and quiet*, good and gentle *Temper*; a lowly modeſt Opinion of themſelves, together with a ſilent, quiet and contented Mind, under their condition; and becauſe thoſe Ornaments are moſt valued, that are moſt coſtly, therefore to recommend this meek and quiet Spirit the more, the Apoſtle adds that *it is in the ſight of God of great price*, *i. e.* commanded and approved

proved and valued highly by him. From the terms thus explain'd, it appears that the thing the Apoſtle would ſay is this, that, the readieſt way for Chriſtian Women to recommend themſelves to God and to their Husbands, is, to ſtock themſelves with Virtues and good Qualities, with inward Accompliſhments, ſuch as are laſting, and will be of greateſt uſe and ſervice, both here, and hereafter; this will appear from conſidering the particulars, injoyn'd. *Firſt*, the *hidden Man of the Heart*, is to be adorn'd, *i. e.* the *Mind.* Diſ. X.

The Mind or Soul, is certainly the Superiour part, and better half of Man, as being that which is to guide and govern the other, and that which makes him a Reaſonable and Religious Creature, the greateſt Priviledge and Honour he is capable of enjoying; and therefore certainly it deſerves to be equally taken care of, with the Body, and to be cultivated and improv'd. To be ſollicitous for ſetting out *the Body* to advantage, and neglect the cultivating the Mind, is as if a Man ſhould be at great expence, to build the Walls and outſide of his Houſe exceeding fine and ſtately, and ſhew no manner of contrivance in the inſide of it, regarding neither Beauty nor Convenience, nor intend-

Dif. X. ing any Furniture; this would be building for the ſight and pleaſure of People paſſing by, and wanting in the mean time an Habitation for himſelf. No doubt but every one would blame ſuch a Man, for neglecting that which is moſt properly *the Houſe*, and ought to be moſt ſerviceable and convenient, for the ſake of appearing well to Strangers, without any farther uſe. They are no wiſer, nor leſs to be condemn'd, who ſpend their time and pains to appear externally fine and handſome, while the Mind within is ſuffered to lie waſt, and wild, and unimprov'd. This is indeed to be wanting to their own deſign and aim, which is to make at leaſt a good ſhew; for the Mind is the principle of that Life and Motion, which is to give true Grace and Ornament to all their Actions: So that however well the Body may be framed by Nature, however fine and handſom it appear, yet if the Mind be weak or ſilly, the firſt motion ſhews it; they can no ſooner ſpeak or ſtir, but they diſcover their Defects: They are like fine Statues whilſt they ſtand motionleſs and ſilent; but when they ſhew they are alive, by Speech and Motion, they turn to awkard and irregular figures, and looſe their comelineſs immediately. This ſhews from whence the Beauty and the Grace of all

all exteriour Geſture and Action proceeds, Diſ. X.
evenfrom the Mind; which being in its ſelf
accompliſh'd inwardly, does govern and
direct the outward carriage and behaviour
of the Body, ſo as to make it handſom
and becoming; ſo that on this account, they
who deſire favour, acceptance, and good-
will upon the ſcore of Beauty, and a good
appearance, would never find their labour
loſt, in adorning and improving of their
minds; it would both anſwer *that*, and a
great many better ends. The Heart or
Mind of Man is, of it ſelf, inviſible and
hidden, but ſo is God himſelf, and yet
acts all; there is nothing diſcovers it ſelf
more or ſooner, in almoſt every look and
geſture; ſo that no care or pains can be
too great about this firſt Mover, this
mighty Spring that communicates life and
motion to all the reſt.

Now the Mind (and here I ſpeak of Men
as well as Women) is to be improv'd by
reading, thinking, and conſidering; People
come to obtain good qualities of the Mind,
as they come by ſeveral habits of the Bo-
dy; by Uſe and Cuſtom, and taking the
proper courſes; ſo they come to Virtue
and Religion, Wiſdom and Diſcretion.
They find that they are born with Powers
and Faculties, different *from*, and ſuperi-
our *to*, thoſe of other Creatures; they
find

Dif. X. find that they can call to mind things paſt, can conſider things preſent, and compare them one with another, and know their difference, and can determine what to do in time to come; they can inquire into their own Original, and find their Species has not been from all Eternity, but was in time created, by a Being, exiſting neceſſarily it ſelf, and voluntarily producing all things elſe: They find this powerful Being has created them with ſo many wants, that they muſt needs depend upon him for Supply, which brings them, by neceſſity, to worſhip him by *Prayer*; and yet hath crown'd them with ſo many Bleſſings and good things, that natural gratitude excites them to return him *Praiſe* and Thankſgiving: By which they unavoidably become Religious Creatures; they evidently ſee that God hath made them and deſign'd them to be ſo, by giving them Abilities and Powers of worſhipping and ſerving him by Prayer and Praiſe, which are denied to all the Creatures of the World but them: For finding it exceedingly juſt and reaſonable, that a Being ſo beneficent and good, as to make them what they *are*, and to give them what they *have*, and moreover ſo powerful as to ſupply them with what they ask and want; that ſuch a Being ſhould be wor-

worſhipp'd, honour'd and rever'd, and finding that no part of the Creation is capable, beſides Mankind, of paying him this Worſhip and Religious Honour and Service, they cannot help concluding, that it lies on them to do it, and that it is one, and a mighty, End of their Creation. Diſ. X.

Thus, by a little eaſie thinking and conſidering, the Mind is fill'd with the knowledge and belief of God, the good and powerful Author and Creator of *it*, and all things elſe; and fully convinc'd of the neceſſity of worſhipping and ſerving him, and that every Man and Woman in the World is deſign'd by God, to be a Reaſonable and therefore a Religious Creature. This is the firſt improvement of the Mind.

The next improvement of it, is, to the exerciſe of Virtue. Without Religion People never will be Virtuous; but when that good foundation is once laid, the other follows eaſily. When we conſider God in all his excellencies and adorable perfections, we find him *in himſelf* Eternal, and Almighty, and All-wiſe, and Pure and Holy; and, *with reſpect to Us*, and all his Creatures, Juſt, and Righteous, Merciful, and Good; and finding theſe to be the Perfections of the moſt perfect Being, we con-

Diſ. X. conclude that the nearer *we* approach to theſe Perfections, the more perfect Creatures we our ſelves are, and the more lov'd and valued by this perfect Being. Theſe are the two bottoms, upon which the reaſonable deſire of being Virtuous is originally founded, the deſire of being as excellent and perfect as our Nature is capable of, and our Abilities and Faculties are fitted to make us; and the deſire of rendring our ſelves moſt acceptable to God, who is the Rewarder of ſuch as endeavour to be like him, and to pleaſe him. Upon theſe accounts we are excited to be Pure, and Holy, Chaſt and Clean, and to preſerve our ſelves ſpotleſs and undefil'd; becauſe we know this Sanctity and Innocence is greatly perfective of our Nature, keeps us in the rank and order God hath placed us; whereas Pollution and Impurity degrade and ſink us below our ſelves, and ſet us on the ſquare with Beaſts that have no underſtanding; and becauſe we know this Virtue is altogether Heavenly, and of ſweeteſt Odour before God, and will be recompenc'd by him, with the moſt pure, ſincere and undiſturb'd Pleaſures in Heaven, the Seat of Holineſs it ſelf. Upon theſe accounts, we are excited to be Juſt and Righteous to one another in all our Dealings, becauſe we know it is ſo excel-

excellent and reaſonable in it ſelf, and ſo becoming us, and neceſſary for us, that when we depart from it, we do, in a manner, diſclaim all farther Converſation with Mankind, not being willing to be govern'd by that everlaſting Rule of Righteouſneſs, of doing by others, as we would think reaſonable, in the like caſe, to be dealt withal our ſelves, but ſetting up our private will and humour in its ſtead, and ſtuddying our conveniency and pleaſure only. Diſ. X.

There is nothing more natural, than that every one ſhould conſult his own eaſe and benefit, in the firſt place; but becauſe that which belongs to *every* one, is really no priviledge to *any* one; therefore every one muſt depart from his natural right in ſome caſes, and ſubmit to Rules that are unexceptionable, and impartial, and favour all the World alike; amongſt which none is like that Rule of Reaſon and Religion above-mention'd, of dealing with others as we would think it juſt, we ſhould be dealt withal our ſelves. There is no body can eſcape ſeeing the reaſonableneſs of this Rule, and the neceſſity of obſerving it, to the ſecurity both of our *being*, and of all we have, and the cloſer we keep to it, the better and more perfect we are in our ſelves, and the more uſeful to others;

Diſ. X. others; it gives us Pre-eminence and Superiority above all that neglect or overlook it; and farthermore, it gives us favour with God, we reſemble him very much, and are exceedingly approv'd of by him, in being Juſt and Righteous. He cannot indeed be otherwiſe, there being nothing to ſway or move him from his eternal Rectitude; but we are capable of being byaſs'd and corrupted, by the temptations both of Pleaſure and Advantage; and that is the foundation of our merit; (in its ſober ſenſe) from thence ariſes our ability of exerciſing Virtue, and the opportunity of pleaſing God, by preferring the being perfect in our Nature, as he intended us, and chooſing rather to reſemble him in his adorable Attribute of Juſt and Righteous, than to be pleas'd or profited, to his Diſhonour, to our own Shame and Infamy, and to the Injury and Detriment of another: Upon theſe accounts it is, we are alſo excited to be compaſſionate and good; the ſhewing pity, and the being kind to ſuch as ſtand in need of our aſſiſtance, is without doubt an excellence, and great perfection of our Nature. To pardon ſuch as have offended us, and ſuch as are not only liable to our diſpleaſure, but to our puniſhment; to ſatisfie the hungry and the thirſty Souls, to cloath the Naked, viſit the

the Sick and Priſoners, to comfort the di- Diſ. X.
ſtreſs'd, to ſhelter the weak and innocent from the power of inſolent and great Men, to right the injur'd and oppreſs'd; in a word, to do good, in any kind, by Money, Councel, and Aſſiſtance, by Favour or Authority, does naturally give Men an uncontroll'd, indiſputable Power and Superiority: The Benefactor will be always uppermoſt, in the Praiſe, and Honour, and Eſteem, of all that ſee and know, as well as of ſuch as feel his Goodneſs: And hereto are we alſo mov'd, by conſidering, that by doing Good, and ſhewing Mercy, we reſemble moſt our Heavenly Father, the Author and Giver of all good things; and who beſtows his favours and his bleſſings upon Men, with this deſign, that they ſhould alſo favour and do good to one another, and be themſelves a bleſſing to their Generation. And hath alſo promis'd, in a thouſand places, to recompence moſt amply ſuch as prefer the being like to him, and doing all the good they can, to any little private intereſt and advantage of their own. There is, I think, no queſtion to be made, but that the deſire of being excellent and perfect, as we are capable of being, and the deſire of rendring our ſelves acceptable with God, and being favour'd by him here,

and,

Diſ. X. and recompenc'd by him hereafter, are the bottom and foundation, upon which are built both the deſire, and aim of being virtuous, which was the ſecond thing, to which the Mind was to attend, and be improv'd.

The *third* improvement is, to Wiſdom and Diſcretion; by which I underſtand, not only the knowledge and dexterity, of being Religious, and exerciſing Virtue, with advantage, but alſo an ability of behaving themſelves prudently and decently on all occaſions, towards all People. It is poſſible to be both Religious and Virtuous, without Diſcretion, but neither Virtue nor Religion are credited or promoted by ſuch People: They are good themſelves, but their good is not at all edifying, but rather hurtful; the extravagance of their Zeal, the indiſcreet menagery of their Devotion, the indecency of their unuſual Way and Geſture, are ſo far from promoting and inviting to Religion, that they rather give occaſion of pity to wiſe and good People, occaſion of offence and trouble to weak and little-conſidering folks, and occaſion of Scorn and mockage to light and profane ones; whereas a ſober, unaffected, grave and diſcreet Deportment, both of Voice and Geſture, in the publick Worſhip of God, is not only handſom and becom-

becoming in it ſelf, but does inſenſibly and unaccountably provoke the zeal of others, to imitation, and excites in them Religious and Devout thoughts. And ſo it is, with the exerciſe of many Virtues, which loſe much of their Power and Efficacy, for want of prudent and diſcreet Conduct. Thus one may loſe ſome part of reſpect to Juſtice, by ſeeing a Criminal treated inhumanly by either Judge or Councel, or elſe by ſeeing him condemn'd with unſeaſonable ſarcaſm, and in a vein of lightneſs; and yet he ſhall deſerve his Sentence, and be juſtly puniſh'd: But yet this Juſtice, thus adminiſtred, ſhall not have ſo good effects upon the minds of Spectators, as it would, if they diſcern'd ſuch gravity, ſuch calmneſs and becoming evenneſs of temper, as would ſhew neither diſpleaſure at the offenders Perſon, nor unconcernedneſs at his offence, but a due mixture of zeal for the ſecurity of Laws and Government, and of Humanity and Pity for the Miſerable; for that is the work and buſineſs of Diſcretion, to attain ones end, by means not only Juſt and Righteous in themſelves, but alſo well approv'd of, and beſt lik'd by others; to do what ſhould, and muſt, be done, but in the moſt becoming and moſt acceptable manner. Dif. X.

Diſ. X. Thus Clemency and Lenity may be ſo indiſcretely exercis'd, to ſome Delinquents, with reſpect to the manner, and ſo unſeaſonably with reſpect to time and opportunity, that it ſhall rather ſeem a diſregard to Juſtice, and an encouragement to Villany, than an effect of Mercy and Compaſſion: And though Nature ſtrongly inclines to Pity, and the Heart of Man yields eaſily to acts of Mercy, yet when it is unſeaſonably and improperly ſhewn, it miſſes its effect upon Mens Minds, and is neither approv'd nor prais'd.

It is ſo, I think, with every thing beſides of Moment; where Prudence and Diſcretion do not ſway and menage, the beſt of Virtues loſe their power and efficacy: *i. e.* there is no compariſon betwixt the good they do under a weak imprudent menagement, and what they would do, if wiſely and diſcreetly ordered: And if Diſcretion give ſo great advantage to Religion and Virtue, which are able of themſelves to bear themſelves out, it muſt be altogether neceſſary in other matters of leſs moment, to make them paſs tolerably. The truth of it is, without Diſcretion neither Man nor Woman are converſible with, nor can they do any thing acceptably; it is that which gives Grace and Ornament to all they ſay and do,

do, nor is it to be neglected in the ſmal- Diſ. X.
leſt matters.

It is hard to tell how it is to be acquir'd, but yet the want of it is ſenſibly diſcern'd on all occaſions, and appears in all the follies and abſurdities that People commit. It is as I ſaid, a dexterity and ability of behaving ones ſelf prudently and decently to all People on all occaſions; and it is ſo very uſeful and becoming every Body, that it ought to be ſtudied much more carefully, than it uſually is, ſince every body is the better for it themſelves, and the more ſerviceable to others. It may be, *Solomon* intended to deſcribe it in part, when he tells us, *Eccleſ.* 3. 1. that *there is, to every thing, a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under Heaven, a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to get, and a time to loſe, a time to keep, and a time to caſt away; a time to keep ſilence, and a time to ſpeak:* That is, there is a ſeaſon and time ſo proper and convenient for all purpoſes, that they who obſerve it not, will infallibly fall into great abſurdities, and commit a world of Errors and Indecencies; and they who *do* obſerve theſe proper times, ſhall ſhew themſelves wiſe and conſiderate People, effect their purpoſes much better, and live in more

Diſ. X. eſteem: *Regard to time*, is undoubtedly a huge and neceſſary part of Diſcretion, but to that muſt alſo be joyn'd a due regard to the Age, and Place, Perſon, and Quality, of thoſe we have to deal withal: The more general and extenſive our conſideration and obſervation of theſe things are, the likelier is our Conduct to be Prudent and Diſcreet, the leſs offences and abſurdities we ſhall commit, the more becoming and more uſeful will our Converſation and Behaviour be. And I inſiſt the more on this, becauſe 'tis probable, that more domeſtick evils and uneaſineſſes, that trouble Families, ariſe from want of Diſcretion, than want of either Virtue or Religion; and therefore when I was ſhewing how *the hidden Man of the Heart* was to be adorn'd, *i. e.* how the mind was to be cultivated and improv'd, I made no doubt of adding Wiſdom and Diſcretion, to Virtue and Religion, as things neceſſary. For ſince the Apoſtle's purpoſe is, that Chriſtian Women ſhould be good Wives, as well as Virtuous and Religious, and that it is their Duty to be one as well as the other, it muſt needs be convenient to urge the providing ſuch qualities as are neceſſary to the diſcharging that Duty, next to Virtue and Religion: And ſince without a competent ſhare of Prudence and

and Diſcretion, it is not poſſible to be either good Wives, or good Mothers, or good Miſtreſſes of Families, it is to be no little part of their concern, to get as much of Prudence and Diſcretion, as they can. Diſ. X.

The next part of the deſcription of this Ornament of the Mind, is, *that it is to be in that which is not corruptible.* Whatever we can poſſibly adorn the Body with, is corruptible, and wears away with time; and all the beauty and the comelineſs it gives, is ſhort and periſhing; ſometimes it happens, that theſe coſtly Ornaments, and gay Attire, are ſo far from adding any Grace or Beauty to the Parties, that they are rather to their diſadvantage, and expoſe them to deriſion, and deceive none but themſelves; but granting they obtain their end, and render them as lovely as they would appear, how long does ſuch a vain deluſion laſt, and what is the uſe of being ſo pleas'd? How many hundred accidents, how many ſore Diſeaſes quite deſtroy this Creature of the Imagination, in a little time? And if it ſcape theſe hazards, how ſtrangely do a few years diſguiſe the faireſt face, ſo that an abſent friend ſhall hardly know it, when he comes again. Sure ſo fantaſtick, uſeleſs, and ſo periſhing a thing as this, cannot be worth the care,

Diſ. X. and pains, and coſt, that People are at, about it, the praiſe and pleaſure of it whilſt it laſts, is inconſiderable and empty; and when 'tis gone, (as it is quickly gone) it leaves either Shame, or Grief, or both, to ſuch as have over-rated it whilſt they had it, and valued themſelves upon that weak account; they are puniſhed in ſome proportion to the vain eſteem they held themſelves in.

But now, the *Mind*, when that is cultivated and improv'd, anſwers ſufficiently for all the care, and time, and pains, that are beſtowed upon it; the Ornaments of *that*, are ſuch as anſwer to their end, they repreſent it always beautiful and lovely, and to all People. It does not depend upon the humour or the fancy, whether Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion, ſhall find favour and acceptance, for they will always find it, and their force is irreſiſtible; whilſt Men have Reaſon and Underſtanding, they cannot help approving and deſiring thoſe accompliſhments of the Soul; nay, we may truſt them with their *Paſſions* alſo, in this caſe; for though their own practice be againſt them, (guided by their inordinate deſires) yet is their ſecret judgment always on the ſide of Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion; and they always like them in others, how much ſoever they

they neglect them in themſelves: The looſeſt People in the World would have their Mothers and their Wives, their Daughters and their Siſters, and all their Relations, Religious, Virtuous, and Diſcreet, rather than Beautiful; thoſe whom they love the beſt, they would have beſt provided; and therefore 'tis the ſetled judgment of Mankind, that theſe are the beſt, the trueſt, and moſt laſting Ornaments of Women. 'Tis true, that when Beauty alſo meets and joyns with theſe good Qualities, they give a mutual luſtre to each other, and ſet each other off, to great advantage; *this* adds a grace and comlineſs to *them*, and they *preſent* the greateſt Beauty yet more beautiful; but *theſe* are Ornaments when *that* is gone, and where it never was; theſe are *incorruptible*, and laſt as long as the mind it ſelf, which they adorn and beautifie. Theſe are of great Uſe and Service, theſe deſerve the greateſt Praiſe and Honour, and theſe will ſtand them in ſtead, when all things elſe are gone and fail them. All Beauty and external Ornaments are of very little Uſe and Service, either to ſuch as have them, or ſuch as only look on: whereas Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion, are of general uſe and benefit; they are ſerviceable to every one; they do not only make thoſe who poſſeſs them, good, but Diſ. X.

Diſ. X. they make them *do* good to all that are concern'd, or have to deal, with them. Beauty and Wit, and Birth and Quality, and fine Attire, attract the eyes and admiration of People; but 'tis another ſort of admiration, that is rais'd by Virtue and Religion; 'tis always attended with Eſteem, and ſecret Veneration; the one is the tranſient wonder of a fine Sight, ſomething that gliſters, and dazles the eyes, and works a little on the fancy, and then gives way to other Novelties, that ſtill occaſion the like wonder. The other is the ſtanding admiration of ſome great and noble work of Nature, which by its beauty and its uſefulneſs, begets eſteem and liking in the mind immediately, and which continue there, and are excited every time the object, or Idea of it, riſes or appears. There is therefore no compariſon betwixt the uſefulneſs of Beauty, and the Bodies Ornaments, and thoſe good Qualities and Graces that are the Ornaments and Beauties of the Soul; and no compariſon betwixt the Praiſes, Honour, and Eſteem, that all good, wiſe, and ſober People give, and have for Virtuous and Religious Women, and that ſhort gaze, and compliment, that vain and idle Spirits pay to Beauty and fine Habits. *Favour*, ſaith one that knew, *is deceitful, and Beauty is vain, but*

but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be prais'd. Favour and Beauty have their praiſe, vain and deceitful as they are, but it is alſo vain, and commonly deceitful, *i. e.* beſtowed with purpoſe of enſnaring and corrupting; but they who fear the Lord, in Wiſdom and Virtue, are prais'd in earneſt, and honour'd and eſteemed with all ſincerity. Diſ. X.

The choice then of theſe different Ornaments and Beauties, is not difficult, the one are uſeleſs, the other good and ſerviceable; the one are lov'd and had in veneration and eſteem by all good People, the other valued, for a time, by young and giddy fancies.

But *laſtly*, and eſpecially, theſe Ornaments and Beauties of the Mind, will ſtand them in good ſtead, when every thing beſides will fail them, and be gone. The Favour and Affection which are only built upon good Features, Colour, Shape, or Dreſs and Ornament, muſt neceſſarily fall to the Ground, when theſe decay and die; and therefore this Affection depends upon Diſeaſes, Accidents, and Humour, for its Life and Being: now this is not ſufficient to ſecure the Peace and Happineſs of married Women; for, not having it in their power to ſecure themſelves againſt Diſeaſes, Accidents, and change of Humour,

Diſ. X. mour, the affection that is to make and keep them happy, is exceeding precarious, and dependent, and uncertain; and therefore ſince it is ſure and certain, that they ſhall ſtand in need of ſuch Affection and Good-will, as is to keep them eaſie and contented, all their lives long, and longer much than they can hold their Beauty and their Comlineſs; they are oblig'd, in common Prudence, to ſecure the affection of their Husbands, by adorning themſelves with ſuch good qualities, as will render them for ever acceptable to wiſe and ſober Men, even when the ruines of their beauty are defac'd; and thoſe are Godlineſs, and Virtue, and Diſcretion; where theſe appear, there will be little want of any thing beſides, or if there be, theſe will excuſe it, or ſupply it; where Men diſcern the fear of God, and a good ſenſe of Religion, prevailing in their minds, and influencing them to the exerciſe of all the Virtues that are proper to them, according to their opportunities and abilities; and ſee them manage their affairs with Care and Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and diſcharge the Duties of every Relation, whether Mother, Wife, or Miſtreſs of a Family, with Diligence and Prudence; they will deſpiſe the entertainments of a light and idle fancy, with reſpect to theſe moſt

moſt ſolid, uſeful, and moſt laſting ac- Diſ. X.
compliſhments of Mind: Such Qualities as theſe will give them Grace and Comlineſs throughout, and render them moſt lovely in the eyes of all that know them; and (which is infinitely more) will give them Grace, and Favour in the ſight of God: And this is that, which they muſt principally mind, for what would it avail them, to be amiable to all the World, if under Gods Diſpleaſure?

The time will come, ſhortly perhaps to ſome, and not long hence to moſt, when they who have miſpent their Life in theſe, or other idle and unprofitable Exerciſes, though not directly ſinful, yet have thereby neglected to improve their better part, to dreſs up, and adorn their Souls, and cloath themſelves with Virtues and Good Works, ſhall ſee the folly of their choice, and find how naked and defenceleſs they ſhall ſtand before the Throne of God, when they muſt give account how they have paſt their Lives in this World. And they who have been Holy and Religious, Conſtant and Fervent in their Prayers and Praiſes, frequent in reading of the Scriptures and good Books, and meditating on the Promiſes and Threats, they find therein; and who have all along been careful to be rich in Good Works, buſied in the exerciſe

of

Diſ. X. of Virtue, and conſtantly doing the ſeveral Duties of their Life; ſhall find the advantage alſo of having thus improv'd their Time, their Talents and Abilities; for they ſhall ſee that this was trimming of their Lamps, and living in a readineſs and expectation of the Bridegrooms calling them; this was *the adorning of the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which was not corruptible*, and this they ſhall ſoon find, *is in the ſight of God of great Price*. What is alſo to be underſtood by *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, here particularly nam'd, will deſerve to be conſider'd by it ſelf, in the following Diſcourſe.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe XI.

I. Peter iii. Verſe 4.

But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the ſight of God of great Price.

ST. *Peter* having told the Women, in general, what kind of Ornaments would beſt become them, the *Adorning the hidden Man of the Heart in that which is not corruptible*, i. e. the improving of their minds in Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion, which will recommend them to the favour both of God, and wiſe and good Men, and will laſt when all other Ornaments corrupt, and periſh, he comes to one particular Ornament, even *that of a meek and quiet Spirit*, *which* he tells them, *is in the ſight of God of great price.* We have therefore, in the *firſt place*, to ſee what is meant by a meek and quiet Spirit; and *Secondly*, to ſhew, how *ornamental* and becoming it is; and *Thirdly*, upon

Diſ. XI. on what account it is *in the ſight of God a great price.* *Firſt*, what is meant by *a meek and quiet Spirit.* By theſe words, we eaſily and naturally underſtand, a ſoft and gentle temper, a peaceful, calm, and patient mind, oppos'd to anger, pride and fierceneſs, noiſineſs, impatience, and a reſtleſs diſcontent. This kind of temper is the greateſt happineſs that can befall any one; it is that which keeps them eaſie themſelves, and makes them ſo to all the World about them. Moſt of the troubles and misfortunes that befal Men, are more or leſs uneaſie and afflicting, as their minds are more or leſs prepar'd to entertain them; ſo we ſee the ſame evil that oppreſſes and over-whelms one Man, makes very little impreſſion upon another. One Man grows loud and paſſionate upon the leaſt occaſion, a look of ſlight, a doubtful or an angry word, ſets him on fire immediately; whilſt another bears the moſt apparent inſults, and heavieſt injuries, with great evenneſs and patience. One Man is calm and eaſie under great loſſes, whilſt another ſtorms and rages under little diſappointments; ſo that a meek and quiet Spirit does moſt evidently give the advantage to ſuch as have it, and delivers them from many ſufferings to which the fierce and angry, haſty and impatient People are ſubject,

ſubject, and is therefore in it ſelf the moſt deſirable temper that can be, in a life, that is the ſcene of ſo much certain miſery and trouble. Diſ. XI.

But ſince the good Qualities we are exhorted to poſſeſs our ſelves of, and the things we are commanded to do, muſt needs be in our power to get, and do, and that a gentle Temper, a meek and quiet Spirit, are not things that we can make or get of our ſelves, but ſuch as God gives us, and we bring into the World with us, how can a Man or Woman be exhorted to adorn themſelves with *a meek and quiet Spirit*? It is what every one deſires, and every one would have, if he could get it. In anſwer to this, it muſt be acknowledg'd, that the Seeds and Principles of all our Paſſions and Humours, are born into the World with us, and that there is generally a predominancy of ſome one humour, that from our Infancy bears ſway above the reſt, and ſhews it ſelf conſpicuouſly, and which peculiarly marks out and denominates a Man *ſo temper'd*: And 'tis ſure, this mechanical propenſity of Nature, is not by any Care or Pains, by any Art or Diligence, to be extinguiſh'd quite, or altogether chang'd, in Education: There will be evermore a tendency and byaſs to that ſide, as all Men feel. But 'tis as ſure,

Diſ. XI. that Care, and Pains, and Art, and Diligence, and Time, and Uſe, and Cuſtom, and good Conſideration, will go a very great way to the changing and correcting any temper, whatſoever; and Uſe, we ſay, (with reaſon enough) is a ſecond Nature; and we ſee that People by habituating themſelves, do almoſt become any thing they will. And therefore, though People have it not in their power, to change their tempers altogether, yet they always have it in their power to change them as far as God requires them to do it, *i. e.* as far as he enables them by Reaſon, and Uſe, to change them, and that is, certainly, to prevent all miſchievous and evil effects that flow from them; thus St. *Peter* exhorts the Women to adorn themſelves with a meek and quiet Spirit, that is, not to put off their natural temper, and put on a new one preſently, but ſo to govern themſelves, as to be meek and quiet upon all occaſions; that by Reaſon and Conſideration they reſtrain themſelves from falling into Bitterneſs, Impatience, Mutiny and Clamour.

It cannot be, but that in the courſe of their Lives, and the menagement of their Domeſtick Concerns, a great many croſs perverſe accidents muſt happen, and they muſt meet with many Diſappointments, many

many Provocations and ſevere Trials, and if they do not arm themſelves againſt them with a patient and a prudent Spirit, their ſufferings will be almoſt doubled on their Heads; now they are not call'd upon, to be inſenſible and ſtupid under what befalls them, but ſo to prepare and behave themſelves, that they may do nothing that misbecomes them; herein they are to exerciſe their Reaſon and beſt Abilities: Theſe are the proofs of their Obedience, Patience, and Diſcretion. Dif. XI.

It would be of uſe to them, to conſider with themſelves, that matters are ſeldom mended with them, by all the noiſe and contention that is rais'd, they are oft-times made worſe, but very ſeldom better; neither the folly nor perverſeneſs of Men, are cur'd, nor any miſchievous unlucky accidents remedied, by fury and impatience: But the things which, of themſelves, would have done but little hurt, do by an indiſcreet and haſty menagement, become the occaſions of great miſchief: Sometimes, even for a ſmall and inconſiderable matter, they fall into ſuch excels of Anger and Diſorder, that they thereby hazard all the peace and quiet of their Lives, even the affection of their Husbands, of which they ought to be moſt tender, knowing their Happineſs muſt

Diſ. XI. end, when that is alienated and loſt from them. There are few People in the World that are upon the ſquare, and independent one upon another, that can compare the provocations and occaſions of their Anger and Contention, with the Events and Conſequences, with any tollerable reſt and ſatisfaction, they find them ſo unequal and unreaſonable, as well as miſchievous; and much leſs comfortably can People ſo near related, reflect on their Contentions with their Partners and Superiours, to whom they owe ſilence at leaſt, and ſome Submiſſion. But generally, the event declares that nothing could be more their Wiſdom and their Intereſt, than a meek and quiet Spirit: It would be better much if they would let their Reaſon and Conſideration teach them beforehand (as it might) what the event will ſhew them afterwards, too late; for the learning People get by ſuch experiences, is commonly too dearly paid for; for they only find, that they have weakly loſt, what they can hardly again recover.

When St. *Peter* has done with his general exhortation to the Wives, to adorn themſelves with good Qualities, and in particular with a meek and quiet Spirit; he afterwards enforces his advice, with telling them, *that after this manner, in the old*

old time, the Holy Women, who truſted in God, adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection to their own Husbands: Even as Sara *obeyed* Abraham, *calling him Lord*; from whence we may reaſonably enough conclude, that a meek and quiet Spirit, will eaſily infer, the being in ſubjection to their Husbands, the obeying them in things reaſonable, and the uſing civil and reſpectful terms to them, as *Sara*, their great Example, us'd to *Abraham*. And *Sara* indeed had occaſion, upon ſeveral accounts, to exerciſe a great deal of Patience and Submiſſion, ſhe was to leave her Native Country, and Relations, and follow her Husband to a ſtrange Land; it did not appear his *Intereſt*, and by a diſputatious and complaining Woman might eaſily have been adjudg'd an unreaſonable humour, and unaccountable extravagance, and not to be complied with, to leave a place, where they were eaſie, ſetled, and in great proſperity, to go they knew not whither, upon pretence of I know not what Divine Appearance, Dream, or Viſion; for ſhe had only *Abrahams* word to warrant it. When People are not diſpos'd to ſuch Submiſſion, as becomes them to the will of their Superiors, they are full of Scruples and Objections, and making Arguments of every thing; whilſt they who Diſ. XI.

Diſ. XI. underſtand, and are reſolv'd to do, their Duty, obey without diſpute, and comply with calmneſs and great readineſs, even under doubt, ſuſpicion, and uncertainty of what will follow.

There may be many Caſes, where a nice and curious ſearch after Cauſes and Reaſons for ſuch and ſuch proceedings, may not be half ſo uſeful, commendable, and convenient, as an implicite truſt, and ready compliance; no doubt but *Sara* had this confidence in *Abraham*, and therefore readily forſook her Country, and her Kindred, and her Fathers Houſe, to follow *him*, into a Land God was to *ſhew* him. Another Inſtance of her mighty Patience and Submiſſion, was the yielding up her only Son to the diſpoſal of his Father, who was commanded, and reſolv'd to offer him up a Sacrifice; not yielding him without the greateſt Sorrow and Reluctance in the World, but yielding him, notwithſtanding them. The Child of ſo many promiſes on Gods part, and ſo much expectation and deſire on hers, and the only Child of her old Age, muſt needs be dear beyond expreſſion; and where is the Mother in the World, that would believe her Husband had receiv'd ſo hard and ſtrange a Command from God, as to offer up an Innocent and only Son, or that would yield it to

to him, were ſhe ſo perſwaded? *Abram* indeed accounted God was able to raiſe him up, even from the Dead, and therefore might offer him up with more content, and leſs reluctance, becauſe he knew that God had promis'd, that *in* Iſaac *ſhould his ſeed be call'd*, and therefore *Iſaac* muſt be rais'd again, though from the Dead, to make the Promiſe good; but whether this were *Sarah's* Faith, does not appear; her Heart, moſt probably, was not ſupported by ſuch hope, but left to ſtruggle with thoſe difficulties, that tender Mothers only can be ſenſible of, on ſuch occaſions. Dif. XI.

The inſolent behaviour of her Maid, under the favour of her Husband, might have afforded her another opportunity of exerciſing her patience, and ſhewing a meek and quiet Spirit, but ſhe was not quite ſo exemplary there, but us'd her cruelly and hardly, and drove her to extremity, which was not of a piece, with that unuſual part that ſhe had plaid in offering up her Servant to her Husbands Bed. But I intend to make no other uſe of her Example in this caſe, than to take occaſion from it, to conſider, how a Woman is oblig'd to behave her ſelf, when ſhe is ſure her Husband wanders from her Bed, (a caſe that happens much too commonly)

Diſ. XI. how far ſhe is concern'd to exerciſe a meek and quiet Spirit, on ſuch falſehood and ill uſage. Some of the ancient Chriſtians, and of the moſt conſiderable, were of the opinion, that it was utterly unlawful for either a Man or Woman to cohabit with each other, notoriouſly falſe; it is indeed ſaid, *Deut.* 24. 4. that *if a Man put away his Wife, he may not take her again, after ſhe is defiled*; and if this Reaſon hold good, it will follow as well, that if ſhe have committed Adultery, ſhe may not be entertained, becauſe in this caſe ſhe is much more defiled, than one divorced, is, by a ſecond Marriage. But in anſwer to this, it is to be obſerv'd, that when it pleaſes God to give a Reaſon for his Commands, the Commands can oblige no farther than the Reaſon carries them, any other People but thoſe to whom the Commands are particularly given: This Command would have oblig'd the *Jews*, without the Reaſon annexed to it; but this Command obliges no one elſe any farther than this Reaſon will oblige them, which is very little or nothing: It is very viſible, that the Reaſon obliges no one without the Command, and therefore only thoſe to whom the Command is given, and therefore *Jews* alone were tied by it: But neither is it the ſame caſe, for a Man to keep

keep a falſe Adultereſs without ever part- Diſ. XI.
ing from her, and to take her to Wife again, after ſhe has been once divorc'd and married to another, from whom ſhe is again freed, either by Death, or by Divorce. Neither is that inference good, that a Man muſt not live and cohabit with an adultereſs Wife, becauſe ſhe was adjudg'd by the Law, to be ſton'd to Death. For tho' if ſhe were legally convicted of Adultery, ſhe was to die, yet the Husband was not at all oblig'd to proſecute her, or to accuſe her; he was at liberty to conceal her ſhame, and to forgive her Treſpaſs, if he pleas'd; or he might put her away privately, as *Joſeph* intended to do with the moſt pure and ſpotleſs Virgin Mother. As for the folly, ſcandal, or indecency, of ſo co-habiting together, they are conſiderations that may make it accidentally, and ſometimes, unlawful ſo to live together; but there is no Divine Command, nor any natural turpitude or uncleanneſs in it, that may ſhew it unlawful for the faithful and innocent Party ſtill to continue with the falſe and guilty one. It muſt needs be lawful for the innocent and injur'd, to be patient and forgive, to love and live with, if they can or will, thoſe that have wrong'd them. And if this be true of Men, with reſpect to faithleſs Wo-

Diſ. XI. men, it is certainly true of Women with reſpect to falſe Adulterous Husbands; they are undoubtedly at liberty, by the Laws of God, to live and cohabit with them: But as they are at liberty to do this if they will, ſo are they at liberty, by the Reaſon of Gods Law, to forbear all Commerce with them; the Band that tied them, is diſſolv'd and broken; and the Husband, without her conſent, has in that kind no farther right to her. The innocent Wife is neither bound to forſake her Adulterous Husband, nor bound ſo to continue with him; he hath ſet her free, and ſhe is at her liberty to do as ſhe will. But yet this liberty is neither to be humourſom nor laſting; if ſhe again co-habit with her Husband, and live with him, as ſhe was wont, ſhe is preſum'd to have forgiven his Sin, and to have agreed with him; his former Treſpaſs will not be a juſt occaſion for her leaving him, when ſhe thinks fit; but new Tranſgreſſions give her new liberty; ſhe may endure his falſehood as long as ſhe pleaſes, but ſhe is not oblig'd to endure it for ever. Here therefore is room for her Religion and Diſcretion, to ſhew themſelves; ſhe is undoubtedly oblig'd to procure the converſion of her Husband from his evil ways, by all the methods ſhe can take, likely

and

and apt to compaſs it; but ſhe is not ob- Diſ. XI.
lig'd *to hurt her ſelf*, for his ſake. If by her ſoft and gentle Admonitions, or if by ſharp and quick Reproaches, ſhe can bring him to a ſenſe of his ungrateful and injurious Uſage, and occaſion his Repentance and Amendment, they will be either of them well beſtowed; and ſhe will be oblig'd to try them. If it be probable, that the Reproofs of wiſe and ſober People, either Spiritual Guides, or grave Relations, will prevail to his Converſion, ſhe muſt endeavour it, with all the ſecrecy and tenderneſs imaginable; ſhe muſt not ſuffer Sin, when ſhe can eaſily remove it; and love and true concern will make her very diligent, and very willing to effect ſo good a Work. But if ſhe be as probably aſſur'd, that the Man is of churliſh *Nabals* humour (as too many Husbands are) ſuch a Son of *Belial*, that he cannot be ſpoken to; but the very diſcovery of his wicked folly, will make him impudent and ſhameleſs, and harden him in his Sin; or if it will in likelihood provoke him to uſe her cruelly, as ſome of brutal tempers are inclin'd to do, and cauſe her to live unhappily the reſt of her time with him, ſhe is not, in that caſe, oblig'd to endeavour to reclaim him; for no Man is preſum'd ſo ignorant of his Duty, as not

Dif. XI. not to know he muſt not violate the Marriage Bed, and therefore there's no need of her teaching him that; and ſince it is the hope alone of reclaiming a wandring Husband, that can make ſuch an attempt reaſonable and convenient, and that ſuch hope is vain, in the before-ſuppos'd caſes, there lies no obligation on the Woman to attempt it; ſhe is then at liberty to conſult her peace, and quiet, her eaſe and happineſs in the beſt manner ſhe can think on. If ſhe take care that her connivance or diſſembled ignorance, her compliance and co-habitation, her ſilence, or her patience and ſubmiſſion, if ſhe take care that none of theſe, give any countenance or encouragement to her unkind and wicked Partner, to continue on and proſecute his unlawful love, ſhe is without blame, ſhe is not oblig'd to make her ſelf miſerable by any Act of her own, but to live as eaſily as ſhe can in that Condition.

The connivence of a Wife at the ſtolen pleaſures of her Husband, will hardly be look'd upon as countenancing Sin, or any other than an act of ſtrong neceſſity, and to avoid ſome greater evil; the preſumption will be always on their ſide, that they will never eaſily endure a Rival in the affection of their Husbands, if they could

remove

remove her. *Sara* indeed, before the Birth of *Iſaac*, out of a ſtrong deſire of ſeeing the Child born, that was promis'd to *Abraham* with ſo great proſpect of felicity and bleſſing, gave him her Handmaid *Hagar*, but in this ſhe has been almoſt ſingular; and of this, it ſeems, ſhe ſoon her ſelf repented, and return'd to the true Wife again. In a word, a Wife may very innocently permit, what ſhe cannot prevent or hinder, and by ſuch permiſſion keep poſſeſſion of her Rights, and defend her ſelf from Wrongs; ſhe may endure her Husbands open falſehood and adultery, without any ſin or blame on her part, if ſhe cannot hinder him; and by this ſufferance and compliance (not conſenting or agreeing to his Sin) may lawfully enjoy all the eaſe and advantage ſuch co-habitation can afford her, and avoid all the miſchiefs and afflictions that would attend and follow a Separation: Neither Religion nor Diſcretion prohibit an innocent and virtuous Woman, the living with a falſe and wicked Husband. Dif. XI.

And when the Women find themſelves in ſuch condition, that Separation would undoe them quite, or make them at leaſt extreamly miſerable (which is the caſe of moſt) as they have truly all the need imaginable of *a meek and quiet Spirit*, ſo nothing

Diſ. XI. thing in the World can ſtand them in better ſtead. When injuries ſo quick as this, and provocations of this Nature, fall upon a violent, and haſty, Diſpoſition; they generally make an everlaſting Breach, cut off all hope of Reconcilement, and ſtop the way, ſometimes, to true Repentance, which mild and prudent menagement might have effected. Nothing ſo wins upon the obſtinate, and melts the firmeſt, moſt obdurate minds, like ſoft and gentle uſage; even Silence, when it ſhews Submiſſion, and not Sullenneſs, is apter to perſwade, than angry Arguments produc'd in oppoſition. All Men love Power and Superiority, and a meek and quiet Spirit ſeems to yield it to them, even when it takes it from them, and diſarms them: Diſpute begets Diſpute, and Oppoſition Oppoſition, but Silence and Submiſſion vanquiſh without Fighting or Reſiſtance: There is an unaccountable force in Meekneſs, Patience, and Forbearance, they cut off all Reply, remove all matter of Contention, and leave Men to conſider with themſelves, the Injuries they have done; they excite in Men a ſenſe of Shame, and Gratitude, and Honour, and furniſh them with all the Arguments that can be thought upon, and urge them in the favour of the innocent. There is nothing, in a word, ſo likely

likely to prevail upon a falſe Husband, as a meek and quiet Spirit, a patient and diſcreet Submiſſion under thoſe heavy Injuries. And if it is ſo likely to ſucceed in this great matter, it will certainly be of huge uſe, in all the leſs concerns of Life: There is indeed no living for a Wife, without a tollerable portion of this meek and quiet Spirit. The folly and the wickedneſs of Men, and the perverſe unlucky accidents that are ſo frequent in the courſe of affairs, do furniſh ſo many occaſions for the exerciſe of Patience and Submiſſion, that ſhe can never think to live with any Peace or Comfort, that will not prepare her ſelf againſt them. Diſ. XL

St. *Peter* uſes moreover the Example of *Sara*, in calling her Husband *Lord*, to teach the Women to profeſs their Subjection, and acknowledge the Superiority of their Husbands: The uſing civil and reſpectful Terms, is what becomes all People, and Wives eſpecially; but what they are, depends upon Cuſtom and Agreement, and of themſelves they are of little value; where love and true reſpect do not produce them, they are only decent and of good Example: And becauſe that Anger and Impatience do uſually occaſion hard terms and unbecoming Language, her giving of her Husband ſoft reſpectful Titles, may

Diſ. XI. may intimate her, to be of a meek and quiet Spirit, which keeps People, we ſee, within the bounds of Decency, and always gives good Words, there being hardly any ſurer ſign of any ones looſing their Temper, than their flying out into Paſſion, and giving hard Language.

Theſe are ſome of the uſes, that Wives may make of *Sara's* Example; and to diſpoſe them to the getting a meek and quiet Spirit, the ſooner, the Apoſtle ſays it is *an Ornament*, which is the next thing to be conſidered, in a word or two. The uſe of Ornaments is to ſet the wearer off to advantage, and recommend them to the favour and eſteem of ſuch as ſee them, it is ſomething that becomes them in the judgment of other People; and in all theſe ſenſes a meek and quiet Spirit, is a great Ornament to Wives, it ſets them off to great advantage, and recommends them to the favour and eſteem of all that know them, and converſe with them, and does moſt ſenſibly engage the affections of their Husbands, and it is that which becomes them in the opinion of all wiſe and good and virtuous People; it is truly a beauty of the Mind, and pleaſes all that ſee it.

It is often ſeen, that all the things, that Wives intend for Ornaments, are ill-plac'd, and

and give them neither Grace nor Comli- Dif. XI.
neſs, whether they be of Gold, or Silver, or Embroideries, or other things, never ſo rare, or coſtly; whereas this good and gentle temper, this meek and quiet Spirit, never fails of giving favour and acceptance; it pleaſes People when they are wiſe and ſober, grave and thoughtful, and conſider beſt, it captivates the judgment; whereas the reſt depend upon a light and giddy fancy.

But *laſtly*, and to crown all, *it is in the ſight of God of great price.* 'Tis *Coſtlineſs* it ſeems, that makes all outward Ornaments eſteem'd and valued; and if they are of great price, they think them more becoming, and find themſelves the more reſpected for them: By a train of idle Conſequences, folks come to make theſe vain Concluſions, and 'tis better to yield them than diſpute them; the Apoſtle ſeems inclin'd to make good uſe of ſuch a fancy, and hopes to recommend a meek and quiet Spirit, by telling them that it is *of great price*, highly eſteem'd by God; and certainly he is the wiſeſt and fitteſt Judge of what is proper and becoming all his Creatures; and if his Creatures underſtand their intereſt, they will, of all things in the World, endeavour to recommend themſelves to his good-liking and eſteem.

The

Diſ. XI. The beauty and the comelineſs that all the Coſt and Ornaments in Nature can afford, are of no value, when the *ſhow* is over; there has been a great deal of noiſe and hurry, trouble and great confuſion, to little purpoſe; the pleaſure reſults from the gaze and talk of idle, wanton People, whom they ſhall hardly ſee again; who half of them perhaps diſlike, what the other half approve and praiſe; and if a fit of Sickneſs comes, or a few years ſteal on their Heads, then all the reſt are loſt. The praiſe of Men on ſuch accounts, is but a poor temptation, and reward for ſuch ſollicitude and care as many of that Sex beſtow on outward Ornaments. Half of it taken in recommending themſelves to God by Virtues and good Qualities, would do it moſt effectually, and keep them for ever in his favour.

But upon what account is it, that a meek and quiet Spirit ſhould be of great price, in the ſight of God? *Firſt*, becauſe it is acting according to Reaſon; and *Secondly*, becauſe it is obeying Gods Commands. *Firſt*, It is acting according to Reaſon; Reaſon is the guide that God hath given to every Man to conduct him in his courſe of Living, and when they act according to good Reaſon, they do as they ſhould, they anſwer to the end of their

their Creation, and that is always plea- Diſ. XI.
ſing to the Great Creator, he ſees the
Work of his Hands proſper. Now to be meek and quiet under injuries and hard uſage, that is not otherwiſe to be avoided or remov'd, is acting with Reaſon, 'tis making the beſt of a bad buſineſs, endeavouring to be eaſie under their ſufferings, 'tis doing what People would wiſh to do, even when they find they cannot; for all Afflictions (we have ſeen before) are more or leſs afflicting, as the mind is more or leſs prepar'd to bear them; and therefore injuries and croſſes and hard uſage, are not ſo oppreſſive to meek and quiet Spirits, as they are to violent and furious Tempers, and therefore 'tis the wiſeſt and moſt reaſonable thing that folks can do, to be as calm and gentle as they can, to break the force of their misfortunes by Patience and Submiſſion. The *wild* Birds beat themſelves almoſt to pieces, in the ſame Cage, where *tame* ones ſit and ſing; and yet the Priſon is the ſame, one is as near to liberty as t'other. The Wives that have the hardeſt fortune, ſeldom mend it by Contention, Clamour and Impatience; they often lay new miſeries upon themſelves by ſuch a menagement, whereas a gentle ſoft forbearance gives at leaſt no new provocation to farther ill uſage, and

Diſc. XI. bears the old with leſs difficulty; it is the wiſdom of every Wife to get this meek and quiet Spirit, in order to her eaſe and happineſs; and upon that account it is alſo commanded them by God; for, God, deſigning nothing but the Happineſs of all his Creatures, commands them every thing that may procure it; and every thing that he commands, has certainly ſome tendency that way, and would, if rightly perſued, conduce to it; this is plain of a meek and quiet Spirit. As the affairs of this World are menag'd, and as Men govern themſelves, there will be ſo many accidental and deſign'd provocations to Anger and Impatience, that People would be extreamly miſerable, if God did not injoyn them, by all means to fit their minds againſt them, to bear them quietly and meekly when they came; and therefore 'tis in kindneſs to us, that he lays theſe Laws and Commands upon us; and becauſe he is delighted in our benefit and eaſe and happineſs, therefore he is delighted with our Compliance and Obedience, and therefore a meek and quiet Spirit, is, in his ſight, of great price; the happier our Obedience to him makes us, the more delighted God is with it, it is by ſo much the more acceptable to him.

But

But neither does his goodneſs and benig- Diſ. XI.
nity end *here*; his aim is alſo our Eternal Good, the happier our Obedience to his Commands makes us in this World, the happier it will alſo make us in the World to come. The Commands that carry their reward with them, whilſt we obey them here, have alſo a reward annex'd by promiſe to them, in the other Life. And therefore there is ſtill the more encouragement to ſet about our Duty in theſe matters. A meek and quiet Spirit, does not only pay it ſelf better than moſt good qualities beſides, whilſt it is exercis'd, but ſince it is in the ſight of God of great price, it will undoubtedly be amply recompenc'd with everlaſting Peace and Reſt and Quiet in the World to come.

Diſcourſe XII.

Coloſſians iii. Verſe 19.

Husbands love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them.

I Have ſhewed you already, in general, that all Duties and Obligations to Love and Service of any ſort, ariſe either from the ſenſe and remembrance of Benefits and Favours paſt, and already receiv'd; or from the hope and reaſonable expectation of Benefits and Favours to come, and to be receiv'd; and that this is the foundation and bottom of our Obligation to pray to, or to praiſe, even God himſelf, for it is for Bleſſings only that we praiſe and pray to him; ſo that the Great Creator has no other right or title to the Love, or Honour, Worſhip, or the Service, of his Creature, than what his Benefits or Favours beſtowed and promis'd give him: It is for our Creation, Preſervation, and all the Bleſſings of this Life, and for the Hopes and Promiſes of another, that we are bound to bleſs and worſhip God. Our

Duty

Duty to him, is not founded on his inward Excellence, his glorious and adorable Perfections, but on his Mercy and Benignity, his Goodneſs and his Loving-kindneſs ſhewn on all occaſions *to* us, and evermore expected *by* us. *We love God, becauſe he firſt loved Us, and gave his only begotten Son for Us.* Dif. XII.

And if this be the caſe of the Relation betwixt the Creatour and his Creature, it is certainly more ſo in the Relations one Creature has to another. It is impoſſible for one of *them*, to have any Obligation to another, either to ſhew Love, or to do Service, but it muſt ariſe either from Gratitude and Thankfulneſs for ſomething good receiv'd, or from the hope and proſpect of ſomething good to be receiv'd. All Duties of Mankind do therefore mutually infer one another; the Duty of a Subject to his Prince, does certainly infer the Princes Duty to his Subject, ſomething *i. e.* he owes his Subject, call it what, or how you will; he muſt lay ſome Obligation or other *on* him, or he can ask no Duty *from* him; it is for the ſake of what one gives, that the other alſo is oblig'd to give. Thus I have ſhewn it is, in the Relation of Parent and Child, there is an Obligation laid by one, as the foundation of the others Duty; and though theſe Duties are

Dif. XII. made Duties by Command of God, yet they are truly Duties in Nature and Reason, antecedently to any Laws or Commands of God; they are therefore inforc'd by Gods Commands, becauſe they are in themſelves ſo reaſonable and fit, and ſo neceſſary to be obſerv'd for the good and quiet of Mankind. God has laid no Obligations on any one to love and ſerve another, but for the ſake of ſomething equivalent to be receiv'd at the others hands, all things conſidered and put together. And indeed there is no Relation commanded by God to diſcharge its Duty to its Correlative, but has its Correlative commanded to diſcharge its Duty on the other hand: Princes are as much oblig'd to diſcharge their Office to Subjects, as Subjects are to their Princes; and Parents are oblig'd as certainly to do their part and office to their Children, as Children to their Parents: The Duty of Princes and Parents, is different from the Duty of Children and Subjects no doubt, but the Duty of one is as much a Duty, as is that of the other. And ſince each Party is by Nature and Reaſon equally oblig'd to perform its Duty, and equally commanded by God ſo to do; 'tis not eaſie to ſee, how one ſide comes to look for, and expect the performance of Duty from the other, without diſcharging

ing

ing its own part; but yet this is the caſe moſt commonly, of that ſide, that accounts it ſelf, and is with reaſon enough accounted by others, the *Superiour* ſide. Thus Princes, Parents, Maſters, and Governors, remember only the Reaſons, and Commands that give them Power and Authority, and that exact Obedience, Love and Service, to them; without remembring the Reaſon and Commands that oblige themſelves to diſcharge their ſeveral Obligations, to their Subjects, Children, and their Servants, the very reaſon and bottom of the others Duty; and oftentimes diſpenſe with themſelves againſt both Reaſon and Command, yet think it very hard and unjuſt, that their Correlatives ſhould at any time relax of their performance of their ſeveral Duties. And thus it is too frequently with many Husbands, who are full of Dominion, moroſely Imperious, and ſometimes Cruel and Tyrannical, ever remembring the Submiſſion, Duty, Honour and Obedience, that their Wives are tied by Reaſon and Gods Command to pay them; but ſeldom or never thinking of what they owe themſelves to thoſe their Wives, by the ſame Reaſon and Gods Commands. St. *Paul* here makes no difference, but having ſaid, in Verſe 18. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own* Dif. XII.

Dis. XII. *Husbands, as is fit in the Lord*; he adds immediately in Ver. 19. in the words of the Text, *Husbands love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them.* Leaving it as much a Duty on the Husbands *to love their Wives*, as on the Wives to *ſubmit themſelves to their own Husbands*; and indeed it is ſo well and wiſely ordered by God Almighty, that whoſoever obeys his Commands, in diſcharging the Duty of his Relation, does thereby make the ſureſt and the readieſt way, to the receiving what is due to him from his Correlative. A good Prince is the moſt likely to find good and obedient Subjects; and good obedient Subjects, will moſt likely engage a Prince to ſhew himſelf good and affectionate, and careful of his Subjects: And ſo the good and careful Parents and Maſters are the moſt likely to make or find the moſt obedient, diligent, and faithful Children and Servants: And dutiful obedient Children, are the moſt likely to ſecure the care and affection of Parents to them; and the moſt diligent and honeſt Servants, are the moſt likely to find their Maſters kindeſt and moſt careful of them; ſo that by diſcharging every one his Duty, the World in general would be happy, and each particular be eaſie in their Station and Relation. And this is alſo the bottom of that com-

mon Saying, which is alſo true and rea- Diſ. XII.
ſonable, that good Husbands make good Wives, and good Wives good Husbands; *i. e.* there is nothing ſo likely to engage one partner to perform *his* Duty, as the others performing *his*. There is no readier way for Husbands to have good Wives, affectionate, obedient, careful and faithful, than by following the Dictates of Reaſon, as well as the Commands of God, *to love them, and not be bitter againſt them.* We have therefore, in the firſt place, to ſee, what is underſtood by *Husbands loving their Wives*, and in the ſecond, what it is, *not to be bitter againſt them.*

There is a love peculiar to every Relation, that a Man can ſtand in by Nature, or can contract by Choice, and it is truly diſtinct from every other Affection. Thus there is a love of honour and eſteem, due to Vertue, Excellence and Perfection, and this is commonly the love we pay to Princes, great and brave People of all ſorts, and commonly our Superiours. There is alſo a love of *Friendſhip*, due to Merit and good Qualities, either real or imagined, generally paid to our Equals. There is alſo a love of Natural Relations, different from the reſt, and which grows up with us inſenſibly, from our Infancy. And the mutual love of Marriage is diſtinct from

Diſ. XII. from all the reſt; and therefore when People are call'd upon *to love*, they are call'd upon to pay that Affection that is peculiar to the Relation they ſtand in to ſuch a Party. Now the love of Husbands is chiefly ſeen in theſe three things; *Firſt*, in being kindly affection'd to their Perſons; *Secondly*, in being faithful to their Vows; and *Thirdly*, in taking care *of*, and making all due Proviſion for them.

Firſt, it is ſeen in being kindly affection'd to their *Perſons*. This indeed is what is ſo properly call'd *Love*, that nothing beſides is thought ſo; and it is ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the making Marriage eaſie and happy, that nothing elſe can do it; and where Men marry without liking of the Perſon of their Wives, if they do not intend to be miſerable themſelves, yet they may reaſonably be preſum'd to intend to make their Wives ſo, becauſe it is the likeliſt thing in the World to make them ſo; and there are very few Women in the World that would upon ſuch ſuppoſal marry, becauſe they know, that tho' a liking of their Perſon will not of it ſelf make them happy, yet, that without it, nothing elſe *will*. It is certain that Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion, and good Qualities, and Birth, and Education, and Fortune, and Eſtate, are all to be conſi-

dered,

dered, in their ſeveral Meaſures and De- Diſ. XII.
grees, to make a married Life, truly and laſtingly happy; but yet without a love and liking of the Perſon, there will be no ſuch thing as true and laſting Happineſs; all the other things will not effect this end, unleſs this alſo be added to them; they will make Men civil, and of good Behaviour, and conſequently, the Wives ſhall not be cruelly and brutally us'd, they ſhall not be miſerable, nor pittiable to Strangers and Standers by, but they ſhall not find themſelves happy for all that. It is not Honour, and Reſpect, and perhaps Eſteem, that will make the Wives happy, but a tenderneſs of affection, which they had rather have, than all things elſe, and without which, the reſt are vain Formality, and an inſipid Courtſhip, a Sacrifice without a Heart, and mere Hypocriſie.

Virtue, good Qualities, and the other Conſiderations above-mentioned, are not only very deſirable, and of great ſervice, in themſelves, but are alſo very uſeful as they recommend the *Perſon* to favour and acceptance; and if they do not that, they contribute little to making the married life Happy; they help to make it not ſo miſerable, as it would be without them, but of themſelves they never make it happy.

Diſ. XII. I would not by all this, be underſtood to recommend a Face or Shape, or Mein and Figure, or ſay, that no Man ought to marry without Form or Beauty; but underſtood to ſay, that no Man ought to marry, where ſomething or other does not recommend the Perſon to his liking and acceptance, becauſe without this liking and affection, he will never make his Partner happy, nor himſelf, which he is certainly oblig'd to do, as much as in him lies. God hath not tied Men to reaſon ſtrictly in theſe matters, nor to ſhew a ſound unnerring judgment in their choices; theſe Affections are under the Dominion of the Fancy, and the choice is innocently govern'd and directed by Imagination; and whatever any Man thinks beautiful and comely, graceful and taking, is certainly ſo to him, whatever 'tis to other People. There is ſomething moſt divinely wiſe in this contrivance and diſpoſal, by which a world of miſchief and confuſion is avoided, that would undoubtedly ariſe on theſe occaſions, but for this great variety and ſtrength of fancy and imagination, by which Men ſee at firſt, and are ſtill held on ſeeing, and are pleas'd with, beauties, and good qualities, that are not ſo well diſcern'd by others, nor acceptable to them. Uſeful are all the faculties

that

that God hath given us; even thoſe that often cheat us, ſometimes do us ſervice. whoever therefore marries without this fanciful affection in ſome degree and meaſure, can never make his Partner happy, becauſe it is *that* in which ſhe chiefly places her happineſs, and without which ſhe does not find her ſelf happy; and after all that can be ſaid, no one is, or can be, happy in this World, but they who think, and find themſelves to be ſo. Dif. XII.

Few Women are ſo weak as to think they can be happy with the affection of the mind only, but they all of them know, that where that is wanting, all beſides is mere ſhew and appearance of eaſe and happineſs: They know that Wealth and Eſtate gives them not quiet and contented Minds, and they know that Religion, Virtue, and Diſcretion, and a world of good qualities, are loſt and inſignificant, where the affection of Perſon, does not recommend and ſet them off; ſometimes they are not ſeen at all, nor any complacence taken in them, where the Party that exerciſes them is not acceptable, or finds no favour in the others Eyes; ſo that it comes to paſs that many Men are counted happy, and might indeed be ſo, in the good Qualities, and Virtue, and Diſcretion of their Partners, who yet are otherwiſe, for want

Diſ. XII. want of this affection of the Heart, through which the reſt are loſt, and undiſcerned, and which (if there) would make them both happy: this affection, will ſupply many defects, and make amends for many failings, this will cover many faults, and make a world of Evils and domeſtick Inconveniencies lighter and eaſier; ſo that in kindneſs to himſelf, a Man of Wiſdom and Diſcretion will be careful never to marry, where he cannot literally comply with Gods Command to Husbands, *to love their Wives.*

The love of every other Relation may be exercis'd and ſhewen in kind and proper effects, without this inward and ſincere affection to the Perſon; as that of Parents to their Children, and Children to their Parents; Brothers and Siſters to each other; Friends and Neighbours, and Acquaintance, Maſters and Servants, Superiours and Inferiors, each may diſcharge their ſeveral Duties to each the other, in acts of kindneſs becoming, and requir'd of, their Relation, and yet, through ſome Misfortune, and Miſtake, Diſguſt, and Provocation, may not truly love their Perſons, and that, as it may happen, without blame, and things may ſtill go on fairly and decently on either hand; but *this* Relation calls for Perſonal love and tender-

tenderneſs, and is not ſatisfied with all the expreſſions and effects of love and kindneſs that can be ſhewed, but muſt be ſecure both of the Heart and Principle, or elſe it languiſhes and dies. In a word, it is a vain thing for any Man to marry with hopes of being happy and at eaſe himſelf, or making his Partner ſo, without ſome liking of her Perſon; and therefore they who look upon this matter as Religious, and intend to lead a virtuous and a ſober Life, will never ſuffer any, or all the Conſiderations in the World, to induce them to marry, where there is any ſort of averſion, or great indifference to a Perſon, or where, at leaſt, there is not great probability of loving. Dif. XII.

The peace and acquieſcence of the mind, is certainly to be preferr'd to all other Conſiderations whatever, as being indeed the end of all the labours and perſuits of life, every thing we endeavour, or do, being in order (we intend and hope) to the attaining quiet and content. Now this a Man can hardly have, that is not eaſie at his own home; and that a Man can never be, that lives in conſtant view of an unacceptable object, and converſes with one whom he either hates, or deſpiſes. And it is a huge miſtake to think, that either Portion, or Alliance, or any other ſuch

Dif. XII. ſuch convenience, will make Men compenſation and amends, and give that eaſe and quiet, which mutual love and tenderneſs will give; all thoſe conveniencies can only furniſh out a better Table, more Attendance, and finer Garb; whereas both Men and Women find they are, and can be very miſerable and diſcontented in the midſt of all ſuch Plenty, whilſt they are ſure that, in the mean time, they want that kindneſs and affection of Heart, that only makes a great fortune eaſie and uſeful to them, and that would make a meaner fortune reliſh much better.

Conſidering therefore, how much the peace and happineſs of a Mans whole life depends upon his choice, he can neither anſwer it to God, nor Man, nor to himſelf, that marries where he does not, or cannot love. And therefore ſince a Man is commanded by God *to love his Wife*, and that he cannot love where and when he pleaſes, he muſt needs be underſtood to be commanded; *Firſt*, not to enter upon Marriage, where he does not love; and *Secondly*, when he *is* married to continue his love, and take all courſes that are proper to confirm and ſtrengthen that affection, and to avoid all manner of occaſions, that may weaken and decay it in his mind.

Firſt,

First, a Man is certainly oblig'd by Gods Command *to love his Wife*, and because this is not to be done whenever a Man pleaſes, he is therefore oblig'd not to enter upon Marriage where he does not love; a Man is not oblig'd, we know, to marry, but he is oblig'd to love when Married, and ſince that can hardly be, if he does not love before, he is certainly oblig'd not to marry, if he cannot love. It may not be reaſonable for a Man to enter upon ſuch or ſuch an Office, but it is very reaſonable, he ſhould *not* enter on it, with an utter incapacity of diſcharging it, as he ought. And therefore the contracting of Children, young and uncapable of knowing what themſelves and Partners, are, or ſhall be; and ſetting the years of conſent very forward to each Party, whatever other good ends it may ſerve, or prevent evil, yet it is certainly of evil conſequence with reſpect to the peace and happineſs of the ſucceeding life, if love and mutual liking do not follow: That practice aims moſt commonly at ſecuring an Eſtate and Fortune; but it were better, generally, if let alone; becauſe the attaining of that end is not the principal and beſt deſign of Marriage, but ſomething in order to it; it will make thoſe who are already at eaſe, much eaſier, but Dif. XII.

Dis. XII. it will not give agreement, union of affection, eaſe and ſatisfaction of mind, which is to be the bottom and foundation of Peoples happineſs; upon this account, 'tis alſo probable, that ſo many People of great Degree and Rank are made miſerable, and more miſerable than their Inferiours, by their imprudent choices. Reſpect is generally had to nothing but Birth, and Quality, to Fortune, and Alliance, without regard to Perſon, Shape and Figure, to Virtue and good Qualities, and other Endowments proper to engage and hold the Affections; and hence they become ſplendidly and exemplarily unhappy, as if it were the ſport of fortune to level all Mankind, and by ſome odd Diſaſter, or their own Folly, to reduce the greateſt People to an equality of miſery and trouble, with their Inferiours; that all the World might be alike happy, all things conſidered and compar'd together.

There can indeed no good be reaſonably expected, where affection does not firſt engage, before Religion ties, the Married pair together. A Chriſtian, truly, cannot with a good Conſcience, nor with common Honeſty and Truth, make ſuch a ſolemn promiſe of Affection, as the form of Marriage calls for and requires, when he is conſcious to himſelf, that he has nothing

thing of it in his Heart, but finds, it may be, an averſion and diſlike, but yet goes on for other Reaſons and Conſiderations: He cannot anſwer it to God, for he is then deceiving, and, it may be, ruining one whom at that time he ſeriouſly profeſſes before God, that he will love, and make as happy as he can. There are, in a word, a thouſand Reaſons why every Man ſhould take all heed of Marrying where he finds he cannot love; and none at all againſt ſuch caution: And therefore ſome Parents would do well to conſider ſeriouſly, before they preſs their Commands too cloſely on their Children, to marry where there is no likelyhood of loving, or of being belov'd. They have a great Authority no doubt in theſe Affairs, (as I have ſhewn you already at large, in treating of the Filial and Parental Duties) but no one has Authority enough to make an innocent Party miſerable, and if a Parent had, he would undoubtedly foregoe it. And therefore 'tis not good to be over-rigorous, where it may reaſonably be thought the Childrens refuſal proceeds from ſome unaccountable Diſguſt, or an incurable Averſion. The Parent may conſider that in ſuch a Caſe, the Obedience and Compliance of a Child, may make her much more miſerable, than Diſobedience and Refuſal Dif. XII.

Diſ. XII. would make her faulty; but when a Man is at his liberty, and under no conſtraint, for him to marry without love, is inexcuſable. From all which, it appears exceeding plain, that for Husbands, to comply with Gods Commands, and St. *Pauls* Advice, *to love their Wives*, it is abſolutely neceſſary that they make ſuch choice as may engage their Affection: And that they never marry where they cannot like, for any Worldly intereſt whatſoever.

But to comply with this Command, it is not enough to chooſe at firſt, where Men can like; for they are alſo bound to continue this their love, to their lives end, *i. e.* as long as they are Husbands, and therefore they muſt needs be oblig'd to take ſuch courſes as are proper to confirm, and ſtrengthen their Affection, and to avoid all manner of occaſions that may wear it out, or weaken it. Some of the Ancient (Chriſtians as we have ſeen,) would allow the Wives to employ more Art and Coſt, in decking and adorning of themſelves, than other ſingle Women; becauſe they judg'd it abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of their Lives, to preſerve and ſecure to themſelves the Affections of their Husbands, and therefore indulg'd that to them, which they denied to others; and it is no leſs neceſſary, to the

the ſecuring this their Peace and Happi- Diſ. XII.
neſs, that Men ſhould take more care than
ordinary, ſtill to continue their affection
to them; and ſhould not ſuffer, Errors
and Miſtakes, Miſcarriages, and light Of-
fences, Infirmities, and heedleſs Indiſcreti-
ons, or the like, to alienate their Hearts
from them, or give them a ſlight and deſ-
picable opinion of them; for that will
quickly grow to coldneſs and indifference
towards them, and then they are not far
from perſonal diſlike, and an averſion al-
though ſecret.

They who cannot bear with many fail-
ings and defects, and make a great many
allowances, are not well fitted for ſociety
and friendſhip; even at large, and much
leſs for Society, ſo conſtant and continu-
ed, as the married State requires; and
therefore if Men will not conſider with
themſelves the imperfections of Humane
Nature, if they will not remember their
own Miſtakes and Miſcarriages, if they
will be unreaſonable, and take Advantages,
and make ill-natur'd Obſervations and Re-
flections on the follies and the weakneſſes
of their Partners, and treaſure them up
in Memory, and reſerve them to feed their
ill humour, and make them occaſions of
diſtaſt, and Topicks of upbraidings and
unſeemly Revilings, they will quickly

Dif. XII. see an end of Peace and Quietneſs, and find their Affection cool and languiſh. When once Men fall into this perverſeneſs, and take any eaſe in entertaining ſuch ſurmiſes and conceits as will (although inſenſibly) beget a cheap and vile opinion of them, they have laid the foundation of future Diſcontent and Diſcord, and are in readineſs and diſpoſition for averſion and hate to follow; and then the greateſt care and circumſpection, the moſt obſervant and diſcreet behaviour of the Women, is not able to regain their good Opinion and Eſteem. When once the Heart is cold, or alienated and eſtrang'd, it is a work of mighty difficulty to bring it on again, and warm it into new Affection: And therefore every thing that tends to ſuch eſtranging of it, is to be carefully avoided by all that would themſelves be eaſie, and make their Partners ſo, alſo.

The Women are preſum'd, becauſe it is ſo much their Intereſt, as well as Duty, to attend this matter carefully, to preſerve the affection and eſteem of their Husbands, by all the fair and virtuous methods they can take; but that will not ſuffice, unleſs the Men will make it eaſie to them, by prudence and good nature; *they* muſt be alſo diſpos'd to think well of, and take in good part, the endeavours of the others;

for

for it is not enough, that a thing be well *done*, unleſs it be alſo well *taken*; without this conſideration and goodneſs of diſpoſition, there will be no ſuch thing as love and mutual kindneſs: For all Creatures are imperfect, and ſtand in need of patience and forgiveneſs at one anothers hands; and in a conſtant Converſation, and the menagement of many and various Family Affairs, there will unavoidably ariſe many occaſions of Diſagreement, and Diſtaſt; and if on both ſides there be not a readineſs to make the kindeſt Conſtruction of each others Actions, to believe the beſt, and lay the faults upon unlucky accidents, and diſregard a great many Inconveniencies, and paſs them over patiently and gently, the conjugal affection will be quickly loſt; for it only lives by kind forbearance, mutual condeſcention, and a good eſteem of each the other. Dif. XII.

And when a Man conſiders, that it is his intereſt and his eaſe, as well as duty to love his Partner, and that he ceaſes to be quiet and happy, when he begins to diſlike or be averſe to her, he will find it worth his while, to take ſome care and pains to feed, and to continue his affection: It will not be thought ſo indifferent a thing, to like or diſlike, even with reſpect to *this* World, that it ſhould be a

Diſ XII. matter of humour and not choice, to be a good Husband, for it is the wiſeſt and moſt uſeful thing that he can do, and that which will contribute moſt to his content and quiet, and therefore for his own ſake, a tollerably prudent Man, conſidering he can never change it, will make the beſt of his Condition, which will be, by making it moſt eaſie and delightful to them both; ſince, in all likelihood, of the many Millions of Married People in the World, a very few are happy and at eaſe, whoſe Partners are not ſo in like meaſure with them.

I have dwelt thus long upon this Subject, becauſe though it deſerve the moſt ſerious Conſideration, yet it ſeldom has it. It would not be out of the way, to ſay, that moſt Men in the World (at leaſt in theſe parts) are happy, or unhappy, according to the choice they make of their Wives. So far at leaſt is certain, that a bad choice will trouble all the reſt of their Felicities, and hinder Men from being eaſie with them: And therefore ſince it is of ſo great Conſequence, it wants, and ought to have a great and ſober Deliberation. It is the means and method God hath pitch'd upon, to continue on the World, till he ſees fit to put an end to it; and though he hath implanted in Men ſuch

deſires,

deſires, as are conducive to the end he hath deſign'd, yet he hath given them Reaſon, Judgment, and Underſtanding, to direct and guide them in their choice, and to give the check to their Imagination in ſome meaſure, and diſtinguiſh them from all inferiour Creatures. They are not, like thoſe Creatures, at their liberty to wander up and down, as common to the whole Species, but they muſt fix on one particular and proper Object, and ſettle there; as their firſt Father had but one *Eve*, ſo are his Children to content themſelves with ſuch like choice, and there abide till Death ſhall ſet them at their liberty. This is the Original appointment of Marriage, even in Paradiſe, when Man was high in Gods favour. Dif. XII.

Now becauſe it is impoſſible where there are two Perſons and two Wills, but there will be diſpute, in matters of debate and doubt, which ſhall be uppermoſt and ſuperiour, God hath decided it, as well by natural Indications, as by poſitive Commands, that Man ſhall reign and govern, and therefore Women are to be obedient and ſubmiſſive: But in return for this Submiſſion and Obedience, Man is to love his Wife, and to affect *her*, above all the World. This he is commanded by God to do; and becauſe it is not in Mans pow-

Dif. XII. power, to love and like, whom and where-
ever he will, he is in reaſon oblig'd to marry no where, but where he can love, he cannot otherwiſe comply with Gods Commands; the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of this, I have been trying to ſhew, from many great inconveniencies and grievous miſchiefs that are likely, and do uſually ariſe from marrying otherwiſe, upon mere Worldly Conſiderations. Not, that many other things beſides affection to the Perſon, are not to be well conſidered and ſought after, for they are undoubtedly, and Men without them never will or can be happy, eſpecially Religious Education, virtuous and diſcreet Behaviour, and other good Qualities, as well as Birth, and Fortune; but that all other Conſiderations are of little uſe to make a Marriage happy, where affection to the Perſon is found wanting, all advantages imaginable will not make a Woman eaſie, where the affection of the Heart is wanting; and ſince the Wife is to be made as happy as ſhe can by Marriage, a Huſband cannot anſwer it to God, nor her, nor to himſelf, that marries with averſion and diſlike.

And it is yet more reaſonable, that when the Men *are* Married, they ſhould ſtill continue on their love; and in order to that,

that, ſhould take all courſes to confirm and ſtrengthen their Affection, and avoid all manner of occaſions that may weaken and decay it. Becauſe without this perſonal love, they will be in great danger of not continuing true and faithful to their Vows; and of not making ſuch Proviſion for them as is fit and reaſonable, which are the other particulars in which the love of Husbands is requir'd to ſhew it ſelf, of which, &c. Dif. XII.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe XIII.

Coloſſians iii. Verſe 19.

Husbands love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them.

HAving ſhewn you, that the Laws of God, enjoyning the performance of ſuch and ſuch Duties, to Parties ſo and ſo related, are all in conformity to right Reaſon and the Laws of Nature; and exact and require no other performances than what are neceſſary to the fair and due diſcharge of all thoſe ſeveral Duties: And that all the ſeveral Duties of Relations of all ſorts (none in the World excepted, no not that between the great Creator and his Creature) do mutually infer each other, and are therefore due, and paid for the ſake of each the other, and that, in the particular caſe before us, God having made it firſt, in Nature and Reaſon, and afterwards, by poſitive Command, the Duty of *Wives* to be *ſubmiſſive, ſubject, and obedient, to their Husbands*, had alſo firſt in Nature and Reaſon, and after by expreſs Commands, made it the Duty of *Husbands, to love their Wives*; and

and having ſhewn, that the love of Huſ- Diſ. XIII.
bands to their Wives conſiſted in theſe
three particulars; 1. In being kindly af-
fection'd to their Perſons. 2. in being
faithful to them, in keeping to their pro-
miſe and engagement; and 3. In taking
care of, and making all due Proviſion for
them. I had only time to ſpeak to the
firſt Particular, and to try to ſhew the ab-
ſolute neceſſity of the Wives *Perſon* being
acceptable in the ſight of her Husband,
(let it be upon what account it will) and
that without ſuch favourable prepoſſeſſi-
on, the Man will neither be himſelf ea-
ſie, nor make his Partner happy as ſhe
ſhould be. This I inſiſted on, for a World
of Reaſons and Conſiderations, ſuch as all
Men know and feel the force of, whether
they act againſt them, or comply with
them; and upon this account, that Huſ-
bands are commanded *to love their Wives*,
yet have it not in their power to love
where, and whenever they pleaſe, it is but
reaſonable to think they are commanded
not to marry where there is any ſecret
diſlike, and much more where there is any
averſion, becauſe this puts them into an
utter incapacity of ever diſcharging their
Duty, and obeying Gods Commands; and
moreover, that when they *are* married,
they are oblig'd to take all reaſonable and
pru-

Diſc. XIII. prudent courſes to ſettle and confirm, and continue in their love, and carefully to avoid all manner of occaſions that may weaken and decay it in their minds.

To all this I have already ſpoken at large. I am now to go on and conſider the other particulars, in which the love of Husbands, is to be ſhewn towards their Wives: and the next is, the being faithful to them, the being true to their Engagements, Promiſes, and ſolemn Vows. This mutual Fidelity is ſo eſſentially neceſſary to Marriage, that the breach and violation of it ſucceeding notoriouſly, does not only diſſolve the moſt religious Contracts, and moſt ſolemn Promiſes of Marriage, and ſet the innocent Party at full liberty, but it diſſolves the marriage Band it ſelf immediately before God. It is indeed the bottom and foundation of all thoſe Promiſes and Contracts, the very reaſon on which they proceed, and the ſuppoſition upon which all ſuch Engagements are built, although not verbally expreſs'd. And therefore when this ſuppoſition fails, when this ground and foundation of the Contract and Engagement is remov'd and overturn'd, the Contract is it ſelf no longer binding to the innocent and unoffending Party: They may proceed in their engagements if they pleaſe, and chuſe, but the Tranſ-

Tranſgreſſion of the other ſide ſets them at liberty, notwithſtanding the moſt ſerious and moſt ſolemn Promiſes: The Tranſgreſſion (that is to ſay) that ſucceeds and follows, not that which goes before, the Contract; there is no retroſpect to be had, no looking back to offences committed heretofore, the greateſt guilt of that kind poſſible diſſolves no following Obligation, becauſe the Offence muſt have relation to the Party contracted with, who is hereby ſuppos'd to be extreamly injur'd and abus'd, and therefore regard is only to be had to thoſe Offences that do violence to ſuch Contract, which muſt be only ſuch as follow after ſuch a Contract. Diſ. XIII.

And what does all this ſhew, but that the nature of a Chriſtian Marriage is ſuch, that it does unavoidably require mutual Fidelity, and the performance of their Promiſe made to forſake all other Perſons, and to adhere to each the other, ſo long as they both ſhall live? This is ſuppos'd and implied in all Contracts; and verbally expreſs'd, and actually engag'd for, in all compleated Marriages: And to this Fidelity the Men are equally obliged with the Women, how little ſoever they obſerve, or think of it. They make the ſame Promiſe, they are tied by the ſame Reaſon, and by the like Command of God: And

if

Dif. XIII. if there be ſome difference betwixt the offence of one Party, and of the other, with reſpect to Reputation, and the confuſion of Families, it is not what concerns the Conſcience, it falls not properly under *our* Conſideration. It is (we have ſeen) the bottom of all Contracts; *Fidelity* is what the Men engage for, on their part, and the true reaſon of the Womens engaging for the ſame, on theirs. And therefore in the violation of it, there is falſehood and injuſtice, they break a ſolemn Promiſe, and they do a great injury: Let any one conſider whether thoſe be not great matters, and not to be ſlightly paſs'd over: Whether it be not what himſelf expects from her, and is not, for the violation of it, ready to call for fire from Heaven for Vengeance; but if a Man be ſo far gone in favour to himſelf, as not to think very heinouſly of his own Offences in this Inſtance, let him, to get a truer ſight of the matter, and to paſs a better judgment on it, let him remove it from himſelf, and conſider it in the caſe of his Mother or his own Daughter, whether he would not think them injur'd in the higheſt manner, if either of their Husbands ſhould prove falſe and wander from their Beds, in perſuit of unhallowed Pleaſures; and juſt as he imagines *they* would take the falſe-

falſehood and injuſtice of their Husbands, Diſc. XIII.
let him imagine that his own Wife takes *his*, and bears it with the ſame concern and heavineſs. It is juſt as reaſonable and fit that his own Father, or his Son-in-Law ſhould injure and afflict his Mother and his Daughter, as *he* ſhould injure and afflict his Wife, by ſuch his falſehood. And if the ſenſe of their injurious grievous treatment, move him either to rage or pity, it may ſufficiently inſtruct him, what deep Wounds his own vile Perjuries are dealing daily to his Partner.

The deep reſentment of this injury by the Wives, is therefore a farther aggravation of its heinouſneſs; this breach of Faith, is not a piece of falſehood and injuſtice of little or no Moment, and which is eaſily paſt by, and born, but one of the ſharpeſt Injuries that can be done, and the worſt taken by thoſe that are concern'd: God has ſo order'd it, that of all Wrongs, it ſhould be the moſt grievous and afflicting, and felt moſt ſenſibly; to make Men, certainly, moſt careful to avoid the doing it. And therefore though all falſehood of this nature be exceeding ſinful, yet certainly thoſe Husbands are yet more unpardonable, who, to their falſehood, add an impudent contempt of Decency and good Fame, and openly afflict and grieve

Dis. XIII. their Partners by an abominable Commerce. This unkindness is not necessary even to the prosecution of their wicked Purposes, and therefore the more cruel and inhumane: It is not only in defiance to Religion and good Morals, and to the reproach of good Laws, and the scandal of a Kingdom, but in it self unnecessarily barbarous and provoking; it were more Manly, Just and Honourable, to be a good Hypocrite, and not to give such publick Offence and Grief, where they are bound to give all Ease and Happiness. This is a great aggravation of falsehood, and makes it cruel, as well as impudent and injurious.

Not but that the most conceal'd and secret violations of the Marriage-Faith, are also in effect unkind, and alienate insensibly and by degrees, the hearts and affections of Husbands from their Wives. A great many accidents occasion differences and contests, as well as a diversity of humours, and the Society is notwithstanding them, easie enough, and to be born with tollerable Satisfaction; but that great change and estrangement of the Mind, that usually arises from the Husband falsehood, and adulterous Thefts, is to the Wife remarkably conspicuous and uneasie: That coldness and indifference that succeeds,

ceeds, in ſpite of all their Art, and faint endeavours to conceal it, by civilities and formal kindneſs, is eaſily and ſoon diſtinguiſh'd and diſcern'd. And therefore upon this account it was ſo neceſſary, to inſiſt ſo long upon the firſt particular Inſtance, the *being kindly affection'd to the Perſon*, becauſe it is the ſureſt and moſt likely way to prevent Mens falling into theſe adulterous and abominable Snares; and becauſe the giving way to theſe corrupt Affections, is the moſt ſure and ready way to diſſolve and break the ſtrongeſt Marriage-love that ever was; and therefore if it be ſo abſolutely neceſſary *for Husbands to love their Wives*, as God commands, there is nothing in the World ſo likely to retain their Affections, as being faithful to their Vows. Diſ. XIII.

When Men give way to new Engagements, it is but reaſonable to conclude, the old ones are wearing out; they will indeed wear out, in ſpite of all deſigns and reſolutions to the contrary; Men are not ſo much Maſters of themſelves, as they imagine upon ſuch occaſions; they do not underſtand their Power and Strength ſufficiently, when they intend to be good Husbands, and yet frequent the company of wicked Women; the virtuous love declines as faſt and far, as the diſorderly and criminal affection

Diſ. XIII. gains ground; thoſe paſſions ſeldom or never meet in one Man; a Man may think they will, but the longer he tries, the more he will find himſelf deceiv'd. He may intend and purpoſe that, notwithſtanding all his follies and tranſgreſſions, he will ſtill retain his old affection to his Partner, but 'tis not in his power, 'tis loſt inſenſibly and by degrees, by wandring new deſires. It ends, at beſt, in ceremonious, formal, cold Civilities, but much more commonly in ſecret hatred and averſion, in outward quarrel and conteſt, churliſh or brutal uſage, nay, and ſometimes in very tragical events. The wiſeſt Husband in the World, cannot foreſee the conſequences of his falſehood, nor know where it will end, in this World. And therefore if a Man be ſenſible and convinc'd, that very much of, if not all, the peace and quiet of his life, depends upon the mind and affection he bears *to*, and the good opinion and eſteem he has, *of* his Partner, he will, of all things in the World, keep faithful to her, for ſo we find it is, (and wiſely ordered too) that the affection of the Wife makes not the Husband happy, unleſs the Husband alſo love the Wife; it is the mutual kindneſs of each Party that bleſſes the Relation, it is not the receiving love and favour from another,

ther, that is truly pleaſing and delightful, unleſs our Minds are alſo well affection'd to them, and we find our ſelves as well diſpos'd as they, to make as kind returns. Diſ. XIII.

So Parents, do not feel the joy and pleaſure of their Relation, in receiving Love and Honour and Obedience from their Children, unleſs they find themſelves poſſeſs'd of that Affection, Tenderneſs, and Care, towards their Children, that is properly Parental; half, at leaſt, is wanting to compleat their Joy and Happineſs, where their own Hearts, are not prepar'd with ſuch affection as is truly Parental, and peculiar to that Relation.

It muſt be much more ſo, certainly, in the Relation betwixt Wife and Husband, 'twill be impoſſible for either of them to be happy ſingly, either in the affection of their Partner, or in their own, they muſt unite their minds, or be uneaſie; we cannot poſſibly be well and eaſie in the World, unleſs that other People will diſcharge the ſeveral Duties which they ow us, but the greateſt pleaſure and content ariſes from the diſcharging well the Duties that we ow to others; that it might always be more in our own power to make our ſelves happy, than in any ones elſe to hinder us from being ſo. Let never Man or Wo-

Dif. XIII. man, think of being happy in the affection of each the other, unleſs they are themſelves as tenderly affection'd *to* the other, as the other is to them. And therefore 'tis a vain miſtake, for any Husband to think he ſhall live eaſily and kindly with his Partner, be her affection never ſo ſtrong and true to him, whilſt he is, in his Heart, indifferent, or cold, to her. And upon this account whoever would be truly happy (as far as Men can be in ſuch Relation) muſt certainly be faithful to his Vows, and never wander.

Were not Religion any ways concern'd in this Diſpute, were there no obligation on the Conſcience urging this Fidelity; yet common Prudence and Experience would preſcribe it, as the likelieſt method of ſecuring that affection of Husbands to their Wives, that is truly neceſſary to the diſcharge of that Relation, and to the promoting and maintaining Domeſtick Peace and Happineſs in the manner that is needful. I ſhall therefore need only to mention the Command of God enjoyning this Fidelity, which added to the former Reaſons, makes the Tranſgreſſor inexcuſable. It is truly ſo much a Mans *Intereſt* to be true and faithful to his Vows and Promiſes, that 'tis enough barely to ſay, it is his *Duty* alſo. It is *one* of *Ten* Command-

ments,

ments, which argues its importance moſt convincingly. All married People are forbid Adultery, and in order to fulfilling that Command, are bid to love each other; for they who love each other, will be faithful to each other; and they who are not faithful to each other, will not, cannot, long continue loving each other as they ought. Diſ. XIII.

To all theſe Reaſons and Commands, the Men of liberty have nothing to oppoſe, in earneſt, but the Examples of ſome Men in Scripture, high in Gods favour, who yet had more Wives than one, or at leaſt had many Concubines. But to this it may be anſwer'd, that *Example* is not the Rule of Life, but *Precept*; a great many good Men have done very ill things; and when the Scriptures recount their evil Actions without blame or cenſure, they do not thereby juſtifie and approve them; if there be a Rule in Scripture cenſuring or forbidding ſuch and ſuch Actions, it is enough; thoſe Actions are ſufficiently condemn'd by ſuch a general Rule, though not particularly blam'd in the recital of them. We ſhould have known Murther and Adultery to have been great ſins in *David*, by their being expreſly prohibited by Gods Commands, although the Scriptures had told us an hundred times, that he was a

Dis. XIII. Man after Gods own Heart, and had not mentioned Gods being highly displeased at them, in particular. His being a Man after Gods own Heart, would not have made us believe that Murder and Adultery were innocent and allowed in him, whilst we found them condemn'd by Gods word in general; but we should have concluded, that *David* was, except in these matters, a careful worshipper of God, and for many good qualities, dear to him. But however, some of these Liberties might be permitted in those days and places, for reasons proper and peculiar to them, which would not be fit for other folks, at other times. And *lastly*, it is most reasonable, to look to the first Institution of it, which was in Paradice, where *Adam* had but one *Eve*; and in the Restauration of the World by *Noah* and his Sons, after the Flood, where each of them had but one Wife; and yet at these two Seasons there was the greatest occasion of multiplying People to inhabit the World, that ever yet has been; and whatever permissions, or indulgences, followed afterwards, 'tis certain that our Saviour Christ reduc'd it to its first appointment and institution, and so the Christian World has ever since maintained it.

The

The other particular in which the Huſ- Diſ. XIII.
bands are to ſhew they love their Wives is, in taking care *of*, and making all due proviſion *for* them: To maintain them as becomes their Partners, whilſt they live, and to leave them wherewithal to ſubſiſt according to their Eſtate and Condition, in caſe they happen to ſurvive them. They are, according to good Senſe and Reaſon, and to the Cuſtoms of our Country, *Friends* and *Companions*, to their Husbands, not *Slaves*, nor *Menial Servants*, and therefore are in Decency, to be their Partners in their Fortunes. They will unavoidably partake of all their Troubles and Afflictions, and therefore 'tis but juſt, that they ſhould ſhare of their Felicities: A Husband cannot fall into Decay and Poverty, nor hardly any ſort of Calamity, but he will certainly have his Wife involv'd therein, with him; they are inſeparable Companions in Miſery and Misfortune, and therefore what can make amends for this, but the certainty of partaking in all their good fortune alſo? Neither is this any more, than what is expreſly promis'd and agreed to, in the Matrimonial Contract, by which it is provided, that *the Wife is endowed with all the Husbands Worldly Goods*; that is, ſhe is to have the uſe of every thing belonging to him, that

is

Dis. XIII. is neceſſary, convenient, and delightful; to be as eaſie and as happy, as his Worldly, State and Condition can make her. She bargains for it upon *her* part, and he engages for it, upon *his*, and is unjuſt as well as unkind, if he deny it.

Neither is this care to end here, it is not enough to let them partake of all the Bleſſings of this World in common with them, whilſt they live together, but it muſt alſo extend it ſelf to the providing for them after they themſelves are dead, if they ſurvive, and that, according to what is ſeemly and becoming, according to the Quality and Condition they have liv'd in, if there be Ability, and according to the Cuſtoms of the Place. It is indecent, as well as hard, that they ſhould fall from Plenty and Eſteem, into a State of Poverty and Vileneſs. And therefore the churliſh and ill-temper'd Men are not only to blame, who deny their Wives, whilſt living with them, what is handſom and convenient for them, but even the kindeſt and beſt natur'd Men alive, who take no care of their Support and Maintenance, in caſe they over-live them; theſe are properly the *bad Husbands*, who by their Folly and Profuſeneſs, or by Neglect and Idleneſs, by Gaming, or Intemperance, or other evil Courſes, leave them (as

(as they call it) to the wide World, ex- Dif. XIII.
poſe them naked and unprovided, to Want and Miſery, and great Calamities.

Men will in vain pretend to love and kindneſs, that are careleſs in this particular, and make not a reaſonable proviſion for their Widdow-hood, as they are able; but rather chooſe to live at large, and leave them deſtitute and helpleſs; as if the ſorrows of their Solitary State were not ſufficient. Where neither Mens Eſtate, Calling, nor Induſtry, can competently furniſh them with Maintenance, it is excuſable, though pittiable; but where it proceeds from Careleſſneſs and Negligence, from Waſtfulneſs and Ill-husbandry, or from *any* Cauſe and Occaſion, in a Mans power to hinder and prevent, there, the not making due Proviſion for their Maintenance and Eaſe, is both indecent, and unkind, and moſt exceedingly blameable. A true and virtuous Love will ſhew it ſelf in outward kind effects, as well as in the inward movings of the Heart: And they who are the Parties moſt concern'd, muſt be able to witneſs their being well belov'd, by ſuch good fruits and conſequences as that kind Paſſion uſually produces; one of which, is certainly a due regard to the Relation, and Affection, the Quality and Condition of Wives, whilſt they liv'd with them,

Diſ. XIII. them, and a proportionable Maintenance for them.

Theſe are the three Particulars, in which the Husbands are to ſhew the love which God commands them to their Wives. They are to be kindly affection'd to their Perſons, they are to be true and faithful to them, and to maintain them decently and handſomly in all reſpects, whilſt they live with them, and to take all due care, according to their Condition and Ability, to leave them eaſie when themſelves are dead and gone. Neither is the Duty of the Relation of Husbands, to be ſufficiently diſcharg'd, by any one or two of theſe Particulars, but by all together; they are indeed ſo chain'd and knit together, that whoever upon good Principles obſerves to fulfill one, will ſeldom fail of diſcharging all: He will ſee the ſame Reaſon, and the ſame Command of God, for all, as much as one. And whoſoever conſiders matters ſeriouſly, and intends to ſhew himſelf a Sober, Virtuous, and Religious Man, in this Relation of a Husband, and does not marry with a wild and ſenſual, heedleſs, inconſiderate Spirit, will certainly oblige himſelf to take all care imaginable, to make a wiſe and prudent choice at firſt, ſuch as may laudably engage his Affections, and as reaſonably retain them; for

when

when that Point is well ſetled, the reſt will follow eaſily, and not without it. Affection will engage Men to Fidelity, and make them duly careful and ſolicitous of making fit Proviſion for them, both in Life and Death. And truly without this Foundation, it will be very hard for any Huſbands to comply with St. *Pauls* Advice, *to love their Wives*, or with the other part of it, in the words of the Text, *not to be bitter againſt them*, which are in the laſt place to be conſidered, and that in a few words. Diſ. XIII.

The Phraſe ſeems to be taken from the offence and diſguſt that bitter things give when taſted, and not liked. And the advice is, that Husbands ſhould not, by a peeviſh and moroſe, a churliſh and ill-natur'd Carriage, make themſelves as uneaſie and unagreeable to their Wives, as bitter things are diſtaſtful to the Palate; or, that they ſhould not be provok'd to Anger and Diſtaſt, and hard unkind Words or Actions, by the failings, heedleſſneſs, and imperfections of their Wives, as the Palate or Stomach is provok'd to diſguſt and loathing, by the taſt of any thing very bitter. In ſhort, they are to uſe, neither in Word nor Deed, any ungentleneſs, or rigour towards them.

There

Dis. XIII. There is a bitterneſs of Language that every one underſtands, and Words that wound to the quick; *and*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *are very Swords:* But that which gives them uſually their Point and Edge, is the conſideration of the Perſon that ſpeaks, and the Relation he ſtands in to us; the words of Strangers, weak or ignorant, though never ſo bad, are in a manner idle, and affect us little; the words of a Malicious Adverſary, make no very deep impreſſion, becauſe we commonly expect no better from him. But the hard words of Friends and Neighbours, Acquaintance and Relations occaſion us Grief and great Concern. The ill uſage of others ſtirs us to Anger and Indignation, but 'tis againſt *them*; but the ill uſage we receive at the hands of thoſe we love, and from whom we look'd not for it, occaſions ſadneſs and much trouble, pain and uneaſineſs within. It is the defeat of our expectation and deſire, that hurts us moſt, on theſe occaſions; we know we love, and we would be belov'd; we try to oblige by all means, and we would be again oblig'd in our turn; we favour them, and would be recommended to their favour; and failing of theſe Returns, expected and deſired by us, we are the more afflicted and diſconſolate. Our concern under any diſappointment, is

ſtill

ſtill proportion'd to the hopes we had conceiv'd of another kind of event. It is upon this account, that harſh and bitter words become ſo grievous to near Relations, becauſe they are ſo little look'd for and expected, the mind is full of other hopes, and is ſurpriz'd to find them ſo deceiv'd; this, of all other things, makes bitter words from Husbands ſo afflicting to the Wives; they are in Reaſon and Nature, to look for all Forbearance, Gentleneſs, and Patience, for Affability and Condeſcenſion, and every thing that can proceed from Conſideration, and good Nature; and they meet with all the Contrary, Moroſeneſs, Peeviſhneſs, Impatience, no Allowances, Clamour, Revilings, and ungenerous Upbraidings; and this, to ſoft and tender Diſpoſitions, is a cruel and afflicting uſage, ſits heavy on the Mind, and wounds the Heart moſt ſenſibly; makes them paſs their hours uncomfortably, and of-times end their life in Sorrow. Diſc. XIII.

And upon theſe accounts this bitterneſs is forbidden, it is truly unmanly and unjuſt, and becoming neither a Religious nor a Reaſonable Creature. We are oblig'd to make the life of every one as eaſie and delightful as we can, and therefore are commanded to be as kind and good to all the

Diſc. XIII. the World as poſſibly we can, conſiſtently with the promoting and ſecuring of our own eaſe and happineſs, and that of thoſe who are related to us, in nearer or remoter degree; and therefore are moſt ſtrictly tied to do nothing cruel and unjuſt to any one; and therefore when we make thoſe miſerable, whom God, and Nature hath oblig'd us to make eaſie and happy, although it be by words only, we are highly to blame; for if a little matter will do the ſame hurt to one, which a great one will but do to another, we are as much oblig'd to abſtain from the ſmall, as from the great Offence; and if the bitterneſs of Words be ſo grievous to tender and good-natur'd People, it is, becauſe the kindeſt and moſt gentle Language, is their due; they have a right to look for it, which ſhould not be defeated. And whoſoever ſhall conſider to what extraordinary difficulties and ſufferings God by his Order and Appointment hath moſt unavoidably ſubjected and expoſed the Women, above Men, as well by their own natural Frame and Make, as by a great many ſad, but uſual Accidents, will ſee himſelf oblig'd in common pity, to deal gently with them, to help, by Patience and Forbearance, to make their Burthen lighter, and to ſuſtain them under their Infirmities.

There

There is alſo *a being bitter* that is carri- Diſ. XIII.
ed beyond Words, and proceeds to perſo-
nal Outrage, Violence, and Hurt; a thing unworthy any good and honeſt Man, nor juſtifiable, without a great neceſſity, betwixt a Maſter and his Slave, much leſs to be endur'd from any Husband to his Partner and Companion, who is of equal Dignity. This Practice, truly vilainous, was of ſo ill ſound and fame, ſo very unbecoming the Relation, that the Civil Laws did, in ſome caſes, allow it a juſt ground for a Divorce; and indeed when People (at leaſt of any Education, or Faſhion) come to that paſs, they ſeem not fit to live together; but yet when they ceaſe to be Friends and kind Companions, they do not preſently become Slaves.

I have now done with the Duty of Huſbands, contain'd in this Command, to *love their Wives, and not be bitter againſt them*, in which there is nothing but what is very reaſonable and fit to be complied withal, by every good and honeſt Man; nothing but what will truly tend to the procuring and promoting his own Peace and Happineſs, and to the comfort of his Life. And ſo indeed it is, with the diſcharge of every other Duty; we vainly ſeek for eaſe and happineſs in Liberty, and diſengagement from our Duties; whereas to ſober and conſi-

Diſc. XIII. dering Minds, 'tis evident, that as this World is ordered, it is impoſſible to be at eaſe, but by a faithful due diſcharge of all the ſeveral Obligations laid upon us, by the ſeveral Relations we contract to one another. When we ceaſe to be good Fathers, and good Sons, good Subjects, and good Husbands, good Maſters and good Servants, how can we poſſibly be happy? Whom ſhall we love and honour, and by whom ſhall we be lov'd and honour'd? Whom ſhall we gratifie and ſerve, by whom ſhall we be gratified and ſerv'd? Whilſt we are ſociable Creatures, we muſt have all the ſocial Virtues; we can *receive* no Duty, whilſt we *pay* none. And tho', when all is done, we ſhall never be very happy, in this World of Miſery, yet we ſhall never be ſo, in any tolerable Meaſure and Degree, without a good Intention, and a hearty reaſonable endeavour to diſcharge with faithfulneſs and care, the ſeveral Duties that we owe to all the World; and which is truly the end and purpoſe for which we are ſent into it, and continued in it; and of which we ſhall, one day, give a ſtrict account to God, and ſhall receive a Reward or Puniſhment according to our Diligence, or our neglect of the performance of thoſe Duties.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe XIV.

I. Coloſſians iii. Verſes 22, 23, 24.

Servants, obey, in all things, your Maſters according to the Fleſh; not with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart fearing God: And whatſoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto Men: Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the Inheritance; for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.

THeſe words do plainly contain in them, *Firſt*, a Command to Servants to *obey their Maſters according to the Fleſh, in all things*. *Secondly*, a Caution about the *manner* of performing their Duty, and the *End* they ſhould propoſe to themſelves in doing it; they ſhould not ſerve *with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God; and whatever they did, they ſhould do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men.* They ſhould not only ſerve their Maſters well,

Diſ. XIV. well, whilſt their Hand and Eye was over them, as if the pleaſing *them* were the only thing they aimed at, but they ſhould always be exactly diligent and faithful in their Service, whether their Maſters were abſent or preſent, and could diſcover them, or no; they ſhould *be* indeed at all times, and on all occaſions, as honeſt and as careful in their Maſters buſineſs, as they would *appear*, to others and to *them* whilſt looking on them. They ſhould obey *in ſingleneſs of heart*, ſerve ſincerely and without diſſimulation; *fearing God*, looking up to him, and knowing they are always in his ſight; and *whatever they do, they ſhould do it as to the Lord*, as obeying *Him*, and deſirous of making themſelves acceptable to Him, as well as to Men, either their Maſters, or others. *Thirdly*, Here is the Reaſon, Ground and Foundation of the Servants paying all Obedience, and due Service to their Maſters, and of their doing it *to the Lord*, or in Obedience to the Lord, *Knowing that of the Lord, ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.* The Service and Obedience of Servants, ſhall not go unrewarded in the *other* World, however it fare with them in *this*; and therefore there is no want of a ſufficient encouragement of their Faithfulneſs and Diligence, *they ſhall*

ſhall receive the Reward of Inheritance, they ſhall be treated in Heaven as Gods Children; and this Reward they ſhall receive *of the Lord*, and therefore there is need of looking up to him, and fearing him, and accounting him their Sovereign Maſter, *for they ſerve the Lord Chriſt*. Their Earthly Maſters, or Maſters according to the Fleſh, may over-look, neglect, or evilly intreat, their utmoſt labours, care and honeſty; but Chriſt their Heavenly Maſter, whoſe they are, and whom they ſerve, will not ſo uſe them; but ſeeing from above their faithful, diligent, and honeſt labours in their Maſters Service, will moſt unqueſtionably deal with them, as good and honeſt Servants, and cauſe them, in due time, *to enter into the joy of their Lord.* So St. *Paul* expreſſes the ſame thing, in Epheſ. 6. 8. *Knowing that whatſoever good thing any Man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* Of theſe things in their order. Dif. XIV.

And *Firſt*, of the Command. *Servants, obey in all things your Maſters, according to the Fleſh.* To obey *in all things*, is a Command of very great extent, and repeated in the like terms, *Titus* 2. 9. and ſo the Children are to obey their Parents *in all things*, in Verſe 20. of this Chapter, and the Wives are to be ſubject to

Diſ. XIV. their Husbands in *every thing*, *Eph.* 5. 24. And yet, you may take it for a Rule, that neither Father, Husband, nor Maſter, nor any Superiour whatſoever, is to be obeyed *in all things*; Obedience without Reſtriction or Reſerve, belongs to no Mortal Man. And therefore let Commands be never ſo expreſs and full, never ſo general and extenſive, there will be always room, and neceſſity, for Limitations and Reſtrictions, ariſing from the reaſon of the Command, and the nature of the Subject Matter, from the poſitive Command of God, and from the Laws of the Kingdom, or ſome other Conſideration, not to be omitted. And though in ſpeaking to the other Relations, I have conſidered theſe exceptions, yet it will not be amiſs to take notice here alſo in what particulars, neither Maſters can require, nor Servants owe, or ought to pay, Obedience.

And *Firſt*, the Laws of God are certainly to be preferr'd to all the Commands of Maſters, Miſtreſſes, and all Superiours; if God command one thing, to be done, and prohibit the doing another, no Maſter can diſpenſe with his Servants neglecting the Command, or venturing on the Prohibition; the Servant is there to obey *God* rather than his *Maſter*.

And

And ſo it is, *Secondly*, with the Laws of the Land, they alſo are to be preferr'd to all the Commands of Maſters and Superiours, becauſe they are above them, and were before them. Even in things not naturally diſhoneſt and immoral, but ſuch as it would be innocent and lawful to do, if they were not actually forbidden by Law, even in ſuch things as theſe, a Servant is not to obey his Maſter, becauſe he has not Power to do thoſe things himſelf, nor Power to bid another do them. The Laws of the Land are ſuperiour to all Maſters, and are always preſum'd to enact upon Reaſon and good Grounds; and therefore though Servants are to obey in all things, yet it is only in all things where they are at liberty to obey by either the Laws of God, or by the Laws of the Land; for the good of the Community, (which is preſum'd to be conſidered and conſulted in all Laws, whether it be, or no) being greater and ſuperiour to the good of Servants obeying their Maſters, it is but reaſonable the Laws ſhould be conſidered and obeyed, rather than any private Orders of a Maſter, though what is order'd to be done, were otherwiſe innocent and lawful to be done, if it had not been prohibited. This puts it paſt all doubt, that a Servant never muſt obey his Dif. XIV.

Diſ. XIV. Maſter commanding him any thing Immoral, or againſt any poſitive Law of God. Thus if a Maſter take his Servant out with him, and order him to ſet upon another, and take away either his Money or his Life, his Command is to go for nothing, he has no Authority to lay ſuch a Command upon his Servant, nor muſt any Servant pay Obedience to ſuch Orders or Commands. The Obligations that all People, Servants as well as Maſters, lie under to be Juſt and Honeſt, and do no Hurt, or Violence, or leſſer Injury to any One, are antecedent to, and greater than any Obligations that a Maſter can lay upon his Servant; and therefore till a Maſter can ſet his Servant at liberty from the Obedience he ows to Gods Laws, Poſitive or Moral, and free him from the Penalties of Diſobedience, he can lay no Orders of his own upon the Servant, contradictory to Gods. The Servant muſt ſay with himſelf, what Virtuous *Joſeph* ſaid under a great Temptation, *How can I do this thing, and ſin againſt God.* How can I poſſibly comply with ſuch a Command of my Maſters, to be unjuſt or wicked, and know at the ſame time I am forbidden by God the doing it? God is the Maſter of us all, and with him there is no reſpect of Perſons, bond or free are alike oblig'd to

to obey his Laws, and no Power leſs than his own, can diſpenſe with any one neglecting or deſpiſing them; and much leſs will the Command of a Superiour here on Earth excuſe a Servant or Inferiour, offending againſt God in pure Obedience to his Maſter. Diſ. XIV.

The Authority of Maſters over Servants, is very uſeful to the good and order of Mankind, and to the welfare of the World, and accounted ſo reaſonable, that a great many ſmall Offences are excus'd in Servants, under Authority, and acting by Command, becauſe they are under ſome Conſtraint and Awe, and becauſe a great many Inconveniencies would follow upon the ſcrupulous diſpute of Servants, weighing and examining the Orders and Injunctions of their Maſters. But this can only be underſtood in things indifferent, or in matters wholly above the capacity of Servants; in all ſuch caſes Submiſſion and Obedience beſt becomes them; but where the caſe is plain and evident, and the execution of the Command muſt certainly be hurtful to them, as oppoſing ſome Command of God, there they muſt needs diſpute and diſobey; there no body excuſes them for acting by Authority, for no one has Authority againſt Juſtice, Honeſty, or Truth; and there is no Capacity too mean

Diſc. XIV. mean to underſtand their Moral Duties, that is ſufficient to deliberate, and to execute deſigns that overthrow them.

But neither are all Servants alike oblig'd to obey their Maſters *in all things*, though Innnocent and Lawful, or Indifferent; becauſe that all are not alike Servants. The State of Servitude is very different in one Country, from what it is in another; and in the ſame Country it is differenced by the variety of Contracts and Agreements: And the Duty and Obedience of Servants, is to be meaſur'd by thoſe Contracts, and thoſe different Cuſtoms. And therefore when St. *Paul* exhorts the *Coloſſian* and *Epheſian* Servants *to obey their Maſters in all things*, if ſome of them were Captives and downright Slaves, and others only Servants by agreement, and hired out themſelves to labour in their Calling, for ſuch and ſuch Advantages, of Wages and Protection, and upon certain Terms; though both theſe ſorts of People might be properly call'd *Servants* by St. *Paul*, and both exhorted to perform the Duty of Servants to Maſters; yet were it evident, that St. *Paul* did not hereby make the State of their Servitude alike, but ſaid the ſame Words to them, in different Senſes, according to the different condition of their Servi-

tude. To the Slaves and Captives he would ſay, *Obey your Maſters in all things, as becomes your ſad Condition, and make your Chains as eaſie as you can, by your Compliance and Submiſſion*; but to the hired Servants he would be underſtood to ſay, *obey your Maſters in all things, according to your Contract and Agreement, behave your ſelves as diligently and faithfully, as you have promiſed them to do, or by the Cuſtom of the Place are preſum'd to have promiſed them*; he might exhort the Slaves to obey their Maſters even at the *Oar*, and in the *Mines*; but 'twere not reaſonable to think, he ſhould thereby exhort the Hired-Servants to ſubmit to be ſent under-ground, or to the labour of the Gallies, if their Maſters ſhould command them thither. Neither the Cuſtoms of the Country, nor the Contract gave the Maſters any ſuch Authority, over the hired Servants, and therefore they owe no ſuch Submiſſion or Obedience. And St. *Paul* does not bring them into any new Bondage, but exhorts and commands them to diſcharge the Duty that they owe, by virtue of their choice and undertaking to ſerve their Maſters in ſuch a Capacity, on ſuch Condition. Diſ. XIV.

It is therefore evident, that Reſpect muſt needs be had to the different State of Servitude of different People, to know in what

Diſ. XIV. what particulars a Servant is at liberty, from complying with ſome Commands of Maſters, that yet are innocent and lawful enough in themſelves. Now if upon ſuppoſal of theſe different ſort of Servants, either at *Epheſus*, or at *Coloſs*, the Exhortation muſt be differently underſtood, with reſpect to each of them; 'tis plain it muſt be alſo underſtood according to the Uſages and Contracts of all the different Countries of the World: For here is no new Servitude induc'd, nor old one abrogated, but Servants are left by Chriſtianity juſt in the State it found them; their Condition is not at all alter'd; but not for the worſe, to be ſure. And if this were well conſidered in the higher inſtances of Princes and Subjects, as well as in thoſe of Maſters and Servants, a great many weak and undue Inferences and Arguments from the ſtate of *Jewiſh* or *Roman* Government and Subjection, to that of other free and brave Nations, had been avoided, which only ſerve to perplex well-meaning People. But that which I would chiefly ſhow hereby, is, this, that all Servants, not being alike Servants, but of different ſorts and degrees, are not alike oblig'd to obey their Maſters in all things, but are at liberty in ſome Particulars, according to their Contracts and Agreements, and are there-

fore

fore only oblig'd to ſerve and obey their Maſters, in all Particulars, wherein they have engag'd to pay them Service and Obedience, either expreſly, or implicitly by the nature of their Undertaking and Employment. And that being the caſe and condition of all Chriſtian Servants with us, is the only caſe that is to be conſidered by us, in ſpeaking to the Duty of Servants. Diſ. XIV.

Every Servant is therefore commanded by God, to diſcharge the Duty and Service which his Station or Agreement require of him, he muſt anſwer the end of his being entertain'd, and fulfill the Conditions upon which he is admitted to Service. This is the Subſtance, and matter of the Command. The *Second* thing to be conſidered is the caution adjoyn'd, about the way and manner of performing their Service, and the end they ſhould propoſe to themſelves in doing it. *They ſhould not ſerve with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart fearing God, and doing whatever they did, not as to Men, but as to God.* They muſt not only appear to be good and careful Servants, by being diligent, and ſeeming very juſt and honeſt, whilſt their Maſters are in ſight, or when they are ſure it will reach their Ears, by others Information; but they muſt

Diſ. XIV. muſt be indeed always ſo, both in their Abſence, and when 'tis likely they ſhall never hear or know they are indeed ſo diligent and honeſt, but by the good effects and conſequences: They muſt be ſo upon Religious Principles, becauſe it is their Duty, both by Gods Commandment, and their own Engagement; they are tied by both, to ſerve diligently and honeſtly, *in ſingleneſs of heart*, without Diſſimulation and Hypocriſie; they muſt be in Truth and Subſtance, as good Servants as they would ſhew and appear to be, to Strangers or their Maſters; *fearing God*. They ſtand continually in Gods ſight, although not always in their Maſters Eye, and they ſhould ſet his fear before them, who ſees them conſtantly, and knows moſt certainly, whether they are as diligent and honeſt in their Maſters ignorance and abſence, as when he ſtands by, and ſees them doing Service. Whatever they do, they ſhould endeavour to approve themſelves to God, by doing it in ſuch a manner, that is, by being ſo diligent and honeſt in their Service, as that God ſhall certainly approve them, whether Men do or no. A Maſter may be pleas'd, becauſe he is deceiv'd, with Eye-Service, and with a ſeeming Diligence and Honeſty; but God is not ſo pleas'd, becauſe he is not to be ſo deceiv'd, but knows the

the Heart, and ſees the falſehood at the bottom. And when a Servant pleaſes God, (as all do that are juſt and faithful, diligent and careful, in their Buſineſs) they ſeldom fail of pleaſing Men. They may by ſome Misfortune, or Miſtake, or by Perverſeneſs, fail of pleaſing Men, even when they pleaſe God, but then they have the ſatisfaction of knowing they deſign'd to pleaſe Men, and took the likelieſt courſe to do it. For Servants are not here forbidden Eye-Service, and pleaſing Men, as it imports the doing well and carefully, under the Maſters Eye, and whilſt he is in ſight, for that is but reaſonable and their Duty, but they are forbidden the being *only* Eye-Servants, and the endeavouring to pleaſe their Maſters whilſt they are in ſight: And are commanded to behave themſelves as well, to be as diligent and juſt and true, at all times, as in their Maſters preſence: And if a Servant would but take that for his Rule, he would hardly ever fail of pleaſing both God and his Maſter; be but as diligent and honeſt at all times, as his Maſter ſees he is, whilſt he is with him, and as he would have his Maſter believe he always is. This would prevent all ſloth, and unreaſonable waſt of time, and all neglect of buſineſs, and all deceit and ſecret Thefts. A Servant never Dif. XIV.

Diſ. XIV. ver cares to appear ſloathful to his Maſter, becauſe he knows it is a quality that will never recommend him, and therefore chooſes to exert his Vigour and Activity while he is by; he knows then what it is will pleaſe him, and what it is, that is his Duty, and therefore he ought, according to his Strength and Abilities, to be as active in his abſence. A Servant, when he enters into Service, gives up his Time and Labour by agreement, to his Maſter, in conſideration of what Wages, Keeping, and Protection he expects from him: And therefore he would be unjuſt to waſt that Time, and ſpare that Labour, that is truly none of his; they are his Maſters by his Contract, and his Maſter ought to have the advantage of them; it is defrauding People of what is their due, it is keeping back part of what is already ſold them, and agreed for, and it would be full as juſt for a Maſter to detain part of his Servants Wages, contracted for, at the years end, as it is for a Servant to waſt a great deal of that Time, and ſpare a great deal of that Labour, that was his Maſters by Agreement: Becauſe a Servant has no more right to his Maſters Money, than the Maſter has right to his Servants Time and Labour; the one does not ſtand to his Bargain, and therefore, and thereby, he

ſets

ſets the other at his Liberty. Juſtice is the rendring to all Men, what is their due, and Injuſtice the detaining from any one what is their due. Dif. XIV.

Now whatever is due by Contract and Agreement from one Party to another, is generally due upon fulfilling ſuch Terms and Conditions; and if one Party fulfill the Terms and Conditions propos'd by the other, he has a right to all that is promis'd and engag'd for on thoſe Terms, and the other is unjuſt if he deny it. This makes it evident, that if a Servant contract with a Maſter, to give him all his Time and Labour, for ſuch a ſpace of Days or Weeks, or Months, or Years, and be as good as his Word, and ſtand to his Bargain, he has an undoubted right to whatever Wages or Advantage his Maſter agreed to let him have, and his Maſter would be a very wicked and unjuſt Man to deny him it, becauſe he earnd it, and deſerv'd it, and it was his due, by Contract and Agreement. This is evident on the Servants ſide, but then it is as evident, on the other hand, that the Servant will have no more right to his Maſters Promiſe and Engagement, than he gains by performing the Conditions on which that Promiſe and Engagement ſtand; and that the Maſter would not be unjuſt or wicked

Diſc. XIV. in refuſing to pay him the full, in caſe it were fully prov'd, that he had not given that Time and Labour to his Service that he ought. This is but Juſtice; and if the Laws do not allow or countenance ſuch Defalcations, and Detentions, it is, becauſe they ſuppoſe and put the Servant ſo much into the hands and power of their Maſters, that they may make, and ſee them fulfill their Contracts, and they are preſum'd to bear with, and indulge ſuch waſt of Time, and ſparing of Labour, as would have been ſufficient for their Buſineſs, and they muſt bear the miſchiefs and inconveniencies, which they would not, tho' they might, prevent, either by conſtraining them to Labour and perform their Duty, or by diſmiſſing them, and having no more to do with them. It is not fit the Laws ſhould make the Maſters Judges, whether the Servants ſhall have their Wages contracted for, when the Maſters were at liberty to contract, and might ſee whether the Servants could deſerve them, and, in great meaſure, make them earn them. But yet the Servants cannot help ſeeing, that it would be but juſt and reaſonable for the Maſters to deny them part of their Wages, if they denied, and wrong'd their Maſters of, that Time and Labour to which their Wages were only due. And there-

fore

fore idle and ſloathful Servants know they are unjuſt and falſe to their Agreement, when they miſ-ſpend their Maſters time, and give him not that labour which they owe his Service. Diſ. XIV.

And that they may not be to ſeek, or troubled with much ſcruples and uncertainty, about the ſpace and proportion of Time and Labour, to be beſtowed upon the Maſters Service, let them conſider a little, what they do in *Eye-Service*, and when they would *pleaſe Men*; and though it would not be reaſonable to expect they ſhould continually exert ſuch Vigour and Activity on all occaſions, as they do when they would ſhew themſelves to beſt advantage, yet it were fit to mend their pace, although they made ſome tollerable abatements; they know very well, there is a difference betwixt the extremities of Sloathfulneſs, and the quickneſs of Eye-Service, and that the middle way between them, is moſt reaſonable and would ſuffice. A moderate and continued labour has advantages that Servants do not always think on, it makes their neceſſary Service, in time, grow eaſie to them; It is ſo in all other caſes; continued and repeated Acts, beget Habits, and things Habitual, become eaſie and familiar to Us; and conſtant and continued labours do

Diſ. XIV. the like, if done with any ſort of Moderation. When Strength and Pains are duly and diſcreetly proportion'd out, they beget a ſort of activity in People, that will not long bear Reſt and Idleneſs, but puts them upon Labour and Employment; and therefore it is truly for the eaſe and intereſt of Servants to beſtir themſelves, as well as to the profit of their Maſters, and the diſcharge of their own Duties to them. It makes their Pains and Labour grow in time eaſie and well to be endur'd by them, and begets in them ſuch an habitual Activity, as will in good time ſtand them in great ſtead, when they come to be at liberty, and at their own diſpoſal. Then they will ſee and feel the benefit of having been good Servants, they will reap the fruits of all that Induſtry and Care and Labour, which they exercis'd in the Service of their Maſters; *i. e.* they will now be Induſtrious, Careful, and Laborious, for themſelves, and in their own Concerns, by having long been us'd to be ſo in their Maſters. It will ſometimes be otherwiſe; but this is the moſt natural and moſt uſual Conſequence.

They who have ſerv'd their Maſters with the greateſt Induſtry and Diligence, will certainly ſerve themſelves the beſt when they come to it: They will not only

ly begin with greater Intereſt and better Credit, but in all likelihood, they will go on with more Succeſs; there is all the reaſon in the World to think they ſhould; that application of Mind, and diſpoſition of Body to labour and take pains, which they have long exercis'd, will not now forſake them, but rather be increas'd and rais'd by the conſideration that the fruits of them, will now be gathered by themſelves and come home. The deſire of thriving and ſucceeding in their Callings, is not ſo ſure and near a way to the doing ſo, as the being laborious and induſtrious in them, is; for the deſire of thriving can only quicken Men, and put them upon Induſtry and Labour, it ſhews them the means that are neceſſary to that end, but they may ſtill know this, and ſtill deſire, without obtaining it; whereas the Men that are already both induſtrious and laborious, ſeldom want the deſire of Succeeding, and find they are already in the right way; this partly gives account why many Servants, when they become Maſters, ſucceed ſo ill, notwithſtanding their deſires and aims of growing rich, and thriving, becauſe they have not us'd themſelves to Induſtry and Labour, and cannot take thoſe pains that are truly neceſſary to the doing well. They Dif. XIV.

Diſ. XIV. may have ſkill and artifice enough, and may be frugal and good husbands, but thoſe things will not do, without great Induſtry and Labour in their ſeveral ways, which will not come when they are call'd for, and found neceſſary, but muſt have been laid up before, by Uſe and Cuſtom; Experience therefore teaches this, as well as Reaſon, that the better Servants any People are to their Maſters, the better they will certainly ſucceed, when they come to menage their own Concerns; and one would think, this very conſideration ſhould prevail with young People to be as careful and induſtrious as they well can, whilſt with their Maſters, that they may find the advantage of it, in good time, themſelves.

There is an abſolute neceſſity of being Careful, Diligent, Induſtrious and Laborous, if Men have any aim at living eaſily and well, and thriving in the World; and theſe qualifications are never to be attain'd by any one, but by Uſe and Cuſtom, and being train'd up to them by a conſtant and continued practice, which is to be begun when People are young, their minds ſuſceptible of Impreſſions, and pliable to heedfulneſs and application, and their Limbs flexible to Labour; this is the time and ſeaſon of making Induſtry and Labour

bour habitual to them: All the Care they take, and the Pains they are at, are truly for their own Service at the laſt, all the Skill and Underſtanding they get, is a Treaſure for themſelves; and if their Maſters ſhould permit them to continue Ignorant and Sloathful, it would be ſo much to their loſs and miſchief; they would not only ſerve *them* much the worſe, but they would be ſo much ſufferers *themſelves*; they would loſe their Time, and be unfit for their Employments: And therefore too indulgent and remiſs Maſters, do never make good Servants, and they will never deſerve to find them thankful for ſuch eaſineſs. For when the Servants come to be neceſſitated to Induſtry and Labour, by ſome unuſual urgencies, or by the neceſſity of their Condition, they are perfectly to ſeek, and at a loſs what to do. Theſe are ſome of the inconveniencies of Eye-Service, of Idleneſs and Sloth, and waſt of Time, which every Servant ſhould do well to think on. They are injurious to themſelves, make them incapable of anſwering the deſigns of their Parents or Friends, in putting them to Trades and Callings, and of their own deſigns of living handſomly and ſuitably to their Condition in the World; and occaſion them, at the ſame time, to be bad Dif. XIV.

Diſc. XIV. Servants, and to defraud their Maſters, of that Time and Labour which is truly due to them, and which they have agreed themſelves to give them, and therefore they are falſe and unjuſt when they deny or take them from them. And tho' the Maſters have a Power, by Puniſhment and by Reſtraint, to make the Servants do their Duty and their Buſineſs, and do not exerciſe it on them, and might be therefore (as they are in Law) preſum'd to reſt contented with what is done, yet ought not this to ſatisfie the Conſcience of the Servant, who knows he is remiſs and negligent in his Maſters Concerns; for his Maſter is all the while deceiv'd, either believing his buſineſs well done, when it is not; or knowing it is not done, when he might reaſonably expect, and require, it ſhould be done by the Servant; by either of which ways the Servant is deceitful and unjuſt. And though the Maſter does not, or will not take notice of ſuch neglect, the Neglect and Offence is nevertheleſs in the Servant, he has not done his Duty, and he is bound to do better for the time to come; he was to do his Duty, not in Eye-Service, *but in ſingleneſs of heart*, in all Sincerity, *and fearing God*, without regard had to what notice his Maſter might take of his Performances:

mances: But remembring what Obligati- Diſ. XIV.
ons he lay under by his own Contract or
Agreement, and knowing that he was e-
vermore in Gods Sight, who is the God of
Juſtice, and who loves Truth and Since-
rity. And there is nothing more likely
both to make and keep Servants good and
careful, than to conſider that God com-
mands them to be ſo, and will take ac-
count whether or no they are ſo. And
therefore it ſignifies little, to diſſemble
with Maſters, and pay them with Eye-
Service, when God diſcerns and ſees their
deceit and falſhood, knows their Hypocri-
ſie and counterfeiting Care and Diligence,
when at the bottom they are truly negli-
gent and careleſs of their Maſters Buſineſs.

It would not be true, to tell them that
every fit of Idleneſs and Sloath were faul-
ty before God, and that all loſs of Time
were *Sinful*; for it is not ſo, ſomething
of that kind is unavoidable; but they
muſt needs indulge as little as poſſible to
them, it will in time become a fault, and
lead to Sin, that ſeldom practis'd may be
innocent enough; and no way better to
prevent it, than remembring, that in the
main, their Induſtry and Diligence, and
Labours are contracted for, and hired out,
and that too great a waſt and conſumpti-
on

Diſc. XIV. on of Time, either in negligence, or minding other matters than they ſhould, is ſo much loſs and injury to thoſe, whoſe buſineſs ſhould employ and take it up. This Principle ſhould be ſetled in the minds of Servants, but it ſhould be in General, and without Scruple, ſo as the Mind ſhould not be made too nice and tender by it, but ſo as to quicken them to make amends by new and greater Care and Diligence at one time, for what is wanting at another, by the Surpriſe of Sloath, and fits of liſtleſneſs; that, in the whole, they may be ſatisfied that they have done no Injury, but well diſcharged the Duty of their Office, and the Truſt they undertook. This is alſo the caſe, in great meaſure of the hir'd Servants, as well as of thoſe of the better ſort, who are alſo Servants, but tied with other Bonds. Theſe ought to know, becauſe they are not always young, and heedleſs, but of Years, Staidneſs, and Experience, they know, or ought to know, that all the Time and Labour that is due to the diſcharge of what they undertake, is certainly theirs, who pay them for it, and therefore are oblig'd in Reaſon and Juſtice to give it them. Neither do they want Encouragements, to excite their Induſtry and Labour, for they ſubſiſt by Credit

Credit and good Fame, and nothing gives it, or ſecures it, like the being Diligent and Careful, Induſtrious and Laborious in their Service. This appears even by *Eye-Service*, which gets them the good Name they ſeek for, and by which they live, till they are laid open and diſcovered; the *appearance* even of Care and Induſtry is profitable to them, and therefore to be ſure, the thing it ſelf would ſerve them moſt effectually, and recommend them to ſuch Favour and Good-liking as they want, in their Condition. Dif. XIV.

And let them alſo add to all theſe natural Rewards, the hopes of pleaſing God by ſuch their conſcientious Induſtry and Labour, and they will want no more Encouragement to ſet about it; and that is certainly the truth of the matter; the Promiſes of Gods Favour here, and in due time, Rewards hereafter, are affixt to the diſcharge of the Duty of Servants, as fully as they are to the diſcharge of the Duty of any other Relation whatſoever, either Natural or Civil; *they ſerve the Lord Chriſt*; and are advis'd *to do what they do, as to the Lord, knowing that of the Lord, they ſhall receive the Reward of Inheritance.* And this they would do well to keep in conſtant Memory, for this will amply recompence

Dis. XIV. compence the greatest Labour, Care, and Industry that they can take. But of this I am to speak at large, when I have spoken to Truth and Faithfulness, and other good Qualities that are requir'd of Servants.

Discourse

Diſcourſe XV.

Coloſſians iii. Verſes 22, 23, 24.

Servants obey, in all things, your Maſters according to the Fleſh; not with Eye-Service, as Men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God: And whatſoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto Men: Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.

HAving ſhewn that Servants were commanded by God, to obey their Maſters, in all things, where they were at liberty by his own Laws, and by the Laws of their Superiours; and to perform their ſeveral Contracts and Agreements, to diſcharge all that they undertook to do, with Care, and Diligence, and Faithfulneſs and Honeſty; and to be in all reſpects as good Servants, as they would ſometimes ſhew themſelves, and appear to be

Diſc. XV. be to their Maſters, knowing they were always in Gods Sight, who will as certainly puniſh falſe and bad Servants, as he has promis'd to reward the good and faithful. I had only time to ſhew the Servants, that having given their Time and Labour to their Maſters by Agreement, for ſo much Profit and Advantage, Wages, Keeping and Protection, as they thought them worth, or they could get, they would be unrighteous and unjuſt, to waſt that time unprofitably, in Idleneſs and Sloath, and to be unreaſonably ſparing of that Labour, that were truly none of *theirs*, but their *Maſters*, who paid them for them, and added ſome few Motives farther to their Diligence and Induſtry, and Labour. I am now to proceed, and ſhew them that they are alſo to diſcharge their Duty and their Undertaking, with all Faithfulneſs and Honeſty, with all the Truth and Juſtice in the World. They are hereby oblig'd, to be as frugal and good-husbands for their Maſters, as they can with Innocence and Honeſty, and they are oblig'd to defraud them of nothing.

Firſt, Servants are oblig'd to be as frugal and good-husbands for their Maſters, as they can, with Innocence and Honeſty, becauſe they are to be every way as uſeful

to

to them as is poſſible, this is the end and intention of all Maſters, in entertaining Servants: They cannot do all things neceſſary themſelves, therefore they truſt others to do what is wanting; they cannot always be at Home, and yet their Buſineſs muſt not be neglected; they cannot always be Abroad, and yet their Buſineſs may require Attendance, therefore they entertain others to ſupply their Defects, that nothing may be wanting. But none of all theſe Ends are anſwered, where Faithfulneſs and Honeſty are wanting: The Maſters abſence is not at all ſupplied, where the Servant does not act as the Maſter would, if he were preſent; and the Maſter ſtays at Home to his loſs, if his Servant, he employs abroad, be falſe and faithleſs. It is therefore evident, that the very reaſon of being entertain'd as a Servant, implies a faithful, juſt, and honeſt Mind, one that can be truſted with the Maſters Concerns, and tranſact in his behalf, as far as he permits him to go. He is to repreſent his Maſter when abſent, and to be as ſollicitous for his Advantage, as 'tis preſum'd he would himſelf be; and when he is not ſo, he fails in part of his Duty, he does not ſo well diſcharge his Truſt, as he ſhould. Dif. XV.

No

Diſc.XV. No Servant is to be unjuſt, or hard, or unreaſonable, in behalf of his Maſter; he is not, for his ſake, to impoſe upon the Ignorance, Simplicity, or want of Skill of thoſe he deals with: He muſt no more think of recommending himſelf to his Maſters favour by over-reaching and deceiving *others*, than he muſt deceive or be unfaithful to his *Maſter*; he is bound to be as uſeful to him as he can, but he muſt continue Innocent and Honeſt himſelf, he muſt reconcile the being ſerviceable to his Maſter, with his own good. And therefore no Maſter muſt encourage ſuch a humour or miſtake in Servants, by ſhewing himſelf pleas'd, or content with any unjuſt Advantages they may have made in their abſence; but muſt give them leave to deal no otherwiſe, than they would deal themſelves; they muſt not countenance or cheriſh ſuch proceedings in their Servants, as they would be aſham'd of in themſelves, and would not appear to have a hand in; becauſe they encourage thereby Injuſtice in another, and by connivence make it their own Act and Deed. And if a Servant be wiſe, he will for his own ſake, make his Maſters Rule, *his* Rule, of demanding, for if that ſhould be unreaſonable, yet it is none of the Servants fault, he is not guilty of the Hard-

ſhip

ſhip or Injuſtice, it is his Maſters, where- Diſ. XV.
as if Servants take a liberty to ſet a higher price than their own Maſters ſet, who know their buſineſs beſt, they may, as it may happen, draw an unneceſſary guilt upon their own Heads, and be unjuſt and exacting, to their Maſters profit, and their own hazard: They muſt therefore be as good husbands for their Maſters as they can, with Innocence and Honeſty be, but no farther.

In the next place, a Servant is oblig'd to be as little waſtful and profuſe of his Maſters Goods and Subſtance, as is poſſible: He is tied to do him all the good he can, and therefore, to be ſure, no miſchief; now all Waſt and Profuſion unneceſſary, is ſo much Loſs and Dammage, and therefore to be avoided; it is juſt ſo much Injury done to thoſe who ſhould be rather profited by them. And to keep themſelves right in this matter, let them conſider how they would behave themſelves in *Eye-Service*, and whilſt trying *to pleaſe Men.* Let them in the abſence of their Maſters, behave themſelves as carefully and frugally, as they would if they were preſent; or be as waſtful and profuſe under the ſight and knowledge of their Maſters, as they are when they are ignorant and abſent, and they may take their ap-

Diſ. XV. probation for conſent. But to appear frugal and careful in their Maſters ſight, and in their abſence to be waſtful and profuſe, is not only Eye-Service and Hypocriſie, but Falſehood and Injuſtice. 'Tis doing their Maſters miſchief, whilſt they believe they are well ſerv'd. This is a matter Servants are not ſo much aware of, as they ſhould be; they think it well enough, if they do not directly and plainly defraud their Maſters of their Money or their Subſtance, whereas there is little difference betwixt a luxurious and profuſe waſt of their Maſters Goods, which is not allowed them, and defrauding them of ſomething poſitively; the Maſters are ſo much poorer, and are forc'd to be at ſo much greater charge, than they expected to be; the Servants allow themſelves more than the Maſters think they can, or ſhould afford them, and the Maſters pay for that Profuſion; and if it be unreaſonable, it does not want much of a civil ſort of Theft. If indeed it be ſo, that a ſordid ſpirit will not make ſuch allowance as is fit and reaſonable to be made, it will be innocent enough to take what is convenient, tho' it be reckon'd Waſt and Profuſion, by incompetent Judges; though it were better to forſake ſuch Service, than act againſt the Maſters Will and Order; but in

in all ſuch caſes where there is no neceſ- Diſ. XV.
ſity of this nature, Waſt and Profuſion are
faulty, and againſt the Duty of good Ser-
vants, it is what they never think fit to
diſcover, but diſſemble and conceal; they
know it is not pleaſing to any Maſter, and
conſequently know it ought not to be done
by them.

Laſtly, All Servants are to be exactly juſt and honeſt, and neither to take away their Money, or their Goods, any farther than they are reaſonably preſum'd to allow them. It is of all Thefts the worſt, becauſe it carries with it *a breach of Truſt*; from Violence and Fraud Men are to guard themſelves with Weapons, and their Wits, they are to look after themſelves, they are threatned, and are bound to be aware, and wakeful. But neither of theſe ſort of Robbers have engag'd eſpecially to ſerve you faithfully and truly, or to do you no Injury, and therefore you depend not on them, if they ſteal from you, they are only *Violent* and *Unjuſt*, they are not *Falſe* and *Treacherous*; whereas the Servants having given their Faith, their Promiſe and Engagement to be juſt and honeſt, are therefore truſted and employed by Maſters, and therefore all their Thefts, are alſo Treacheries, and are aggravated by

Diſ. XV. the Truſt that is repoſed in them. They are greater Villains than other People that ſteal more, becauſe they have bound themſelves to be exactly honeſt, and ſecure their Maſters, to the beſt of their Abilities, from other People, and are the more confided in on that account.

If a Servant kill his Maſter, or a Wife her Husband, or a Prieſt his Biſhop, it is not accounted by the Laws a ſimple *Murther*, but a ſort of *Treaſon*, becauſe theſe Parties owe Faith and Allegiance to the other; their Crimes are rais'd proportionably to the Obligations they lay under to thoſe Superiours, and their Cruelty as great and provoking, as the Truſt and Confidence repos'd in ſuch Relations was reaſonable and juſt. It is much the ſame thing in leſſer Inſtances, the falſehood and perfidiouſneſs of Friends, Relations, and ſuch as are entruſted, raiſes their injuſtice to as great a height, as the expectation of Faith and Honeſty in them had been juſtly rais'd. And therefore, upon this account, there is more wickedneſs in the Theft of *Servants*, than in that of *Strangers*, becauſe it is, (as is evident) accompanied with breach of Truſt, Falſehood, and Treachery, againſt which there is no guard.

Let therefore Servants, who at any time, find themſelves under the temptation

on of defrauding their Maſters, Miſtreſſes, Diſ. XV.
or any elſe that truſt them, conſider but theſe few things. *Firſt*, That the practice they are about, is evidently, in it ſelf, very wicked. *Secondly*, That it is yet more wicked in them, becauſe they are entruſted. *Thirdly*, That a diſcovery of it here, is like to be their Ruine. And *Laſtly*, That whether diſcover'd or no, it will lie as a burthen on the Conſcience, and will require Repentance and Satisfaction, or, without them, be ſorely puniſh'd and aveng'd by God. *Firſt*, The practice they are venturing on is evidently, in it ſelf wicked. It is Injuſtice, to take from their Maſter, what is his, and appropriate it to themſelves, who have no right to it. The firſt principle of common Honeſty, and indeed of all Human Converſe is, that, which our Saviour hath laid down in St. *Matth.* 7. 12. having firſt laid it down in all Mens Hearts, *Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do to them.* Now Theft is a manifeſt Violation of this Principle, it being certain, that no one can be willing that another ſhould either take away, or detain from him what is his due, and to which the other has no right. In this eſpecially conſiſts the pravity of Theft, as indeed of all other Inhumane Acts, the doing that to another

Diſ. XV. knowingly and willingly, which he believes is grievous and injurious to him, and which he would think unreaſonable to ſuffer at the others Hands. For here the Man does miſchief to another, againſt his own Conſcience; he defrauds his Neighbour of ſomething that he likes, and knows at the ſame time he ſhould not do ſo; which is an Offence againſt his Brothers good, and againſt that Light that God hath plac'd in him, and every Man, to guide and direct his Practice by. So that whatever can make an Act wicked, is found in *Stealing*; and it is not a Sin only becauſe it is forbidden by God, but it is forbidden by God, becauſe it is directly a Sin againſt the good and quiet of Mankind, and would deſtroy all Right, and ſubvert the order of the World. As little therefore as People think of it, whenever they invade another Mans Right either privily or openly, by taking away his Subſtance or his Money, they are undermining and ſubverting the foundation of every Mans Security, deſtroying mutual Truſt and Confidence, injuring their Neighbour, ſinning againſt their own Conſcience, and offending againſt both Divine and Human Laws, and therefore needs muſt know that they do wickedly. *Secondly*, Servants thus defrauding their Maſters, are yet more wicked than other People, doing the ſame things

things, becauſe they alſo betray a Truſt, as I have before ſhewn you. They could not have an opportunity of doing Miſchief, but by the greateſt Diſſimulation and Treachery imaginable; they counterfeit Juſtice, Truth, and Honeſty, and other good Qualities, by which they come to be truſted and confided in, and by this Truſt and Confidence they are enabled to do Miſchief, and do it. By how much the leſs ſuch Villainy is expected from them, ſo much more Vilainous ſuch Practice is in them; but of this before. The *Third* thing, Servants ſhould conſider, when under any temptations to ſteal, either to ſatisfie their covetous Deſires, or feed their Wantonneſs and Luxury, is this, that a diſcovery of it here, is like to be their Ruin. Their very Livelihood does often-times depend upon their Credit; their Faithfulneſs and Honeſty are better to them, than their Hands and Feet; and all their Skill and Induſtry, their Strength and their Abilities would ſignifie little, if they were fam'd for falſe and unjuſt; their other good Qualities would make them more ſuſpected and avoided, rather than recommend them to Employment, if People could not truſt them. Dif. XV.

Maſters will bear with many defects of Skill and Diligence, where they are ſure

Diſc XV. the Servants are exactly juſt and honeſt; but where they know them falſe and unjuſt, they will have no regard to Induſtry and Labour; becauſe they muſt be always on the watch; they muſt be looking ſtill, that what they get them by their Induſtry and Labour, they ſhould not loſe by their Thievery; they muſt be always on their guard againſt thoſe, whoſe buſineſs it is to ſecure them from thoſe fears. There is nothing ſo neceſſary to a Servant, as the Reputation of being Juſt and Honeſt; nothing more certain to undoe them, to all intents and purpoſes, than a bad Fame, and the ſuſpicion of falſe dealing with their Maſters; and therefore if they acted only upon *prudential* Conſiderations, and conſulted their own Benefit, they ſhould of all things in the World, be honeſt; when a Servant ſteals, he undermines the very ground he ſtands upon; thinks he is only taking ſomething from his Maſter, whilſt he is taking away from himſelf the means of his own Subſiſtence; for when his frauds are once diſcover'd, he is abſolutely ruin'd. It were therefore well if ſuch a Conſideration as this were preſent to the minds of Servants, under their temptations to Injuſtice and Deceit. That there is all the danger, in the World, of a diſcovery of their Thefts, ſome-time or other, and

and that when-ever that is made, they Diſ. XV.
ſhall, probably, be undone: And there-
fore though their Wants and their Deſires
of what is none of theirs, be very great
and preſſing, for the preſent, yet had they
better go without it, even in point of Pro-
fit, becauſe the knowledge of ſuch Fraud
and Theft, will quite diſable them from
ever making an Advantage more, by ma-
king them incapable of farther Service,
for who will entertain a Thief and Vil-
lain? This is ſo ſure a Conſequence of
falſehood in a Servant, that they have no-
thing to depend upon, but the hopes of
lying conceal'd, and that their Thefts will
never be diſcover'd; which hopes are yet
ſo often diſappointed, that very few, who
have for any time been guilty of this Pra-
ctice, do altogether eſcape the notice of
their Maſters; the Reputation of Servants
is ſo dear and valuable, that many Ma-
ſters will not charge them down-right with
that Sin, who yet are well enough aſſur'd
themſelves, that they are guilty of it;
and others have all cauſe to ſuſpect, but
for prudential Reaſons never will accuſe:
And others ſee it well enough, but would
not irritate too far, and make their Ser-
vants deſperate by the Publication, hoping
it will proceed no farther, but that the
Grace of God will influence them to Ho-
neſty

Diſc. XV. neſty and Juſtice, and they will ſee the folly and naughtineſs of all ſuch Courſes. Few Servants of any Note, or Continuance, walk ſo inviſible and in the Clouds, in any of theſe wicked Practices, as they imagine; the Eyes of their Superiours are often on them, when they little think of it. And they will be deceiv'd, if they think that all are *Ignorant*, who are *Silent*, and that they are ſecure and unſuſpected, becauſe they are not charg'd or accus'd. This is the Rule that Hired-Servants may reaſonably enough meaſure their ſafety by, theſe methods of Indulgence and Forbearance, would not be altogether ſo diſcreetly us'd by Maſters with reſpect to *them*, who are ſo moveable and fugitive, and ought not to be born with for a Moment in their wicked frauds; but they are proper enough with reſpect to Servants of a better Rank, and who are tied by Covenants to abide with them for years. It is ſometimes a piece of Charity, to endeavour by a prudent connivence and concealment of their faults of this kind, to reclaim them, becauſe the divulging of them, is likely enough to ruine them for ever, either by hardning them in Sin, or taking away their Credit, ſo that they never can be truſted or employed by any other. But this Concealment is to be ſo pru-

Prudently manag'd, that it ſhall not by any means encourage them to proceed in any ſuch wicked ways; it would be well, that light enough ſhould be let in upon the Servants, to let them ſee, 'tis poſſible their Maſters may have ſome notice of their Practice, and yet not enough to convince them, that they actually know all; the certainty of being diſcovered, may either harden them, and make them impudent, or may diſcourage them too much, and kill their Induſtry and Vigour quite; whereas a light Suſpition, may promote that Induſtry and Vigour, and give new Life, and ſet them on endeavouring with new Diligence and Honeſty, to make indeed amends for what is paſt, and to remove all cauſes of Suſpicion (as the Servants fancy) for the future; and to the helping on this good Deſign, the Maſters muſt not fail of frequently commending to thoſe Servants, faithfulneſs and honeſty, and true and juſt Proceedings; for by theſe means, they do their Duty, and tell the Servants of their faults at the ſame time. Diſ. XV.

But *Laſtly*, Let the Servants conſider, that whether or no, this diſcovery be made to *Men* of their Injuſtice and Falſehood, yet *God* ſees them continually, they are always open to his Eye; and their falſe Practice

Dis. XV. ctice will always be a burthen on their Conscience, they must repent and make amends, or they will certainly be punish'd in the other World; this Consideration would prevent all frauds and evil practices in Servants, and keep them just and honest. What will it signifie to conceal your Thefts and falsehood from your Masters, and appear honest, when your own Heart assures you, you are false and wicked; and when your Conscience tells you, that God who is to judge you at the last Day, knows you exactly; and that you cannot stray, even in a Thought, but he discerns, and marks it down? Try to conceal your falsehood from your self, and to corrupt your Memory from giving evidence against you, that you may be at peace and quiet whilst you rob your Master. Use all your Art and Diligence to make your self believe, that what you take from him is yours, and that you have a Right and Title to it; that notwithstanding you dare not let him see you take the least sum of Money, or smallest quantity of Goods that is, yet he is willing you should do, all that you do, and is consenting; do but try to make these things easie to you, before you begin, and then you will not so much regard whether God sees or no, nor be so apprehensive of him, if he do.

But

But 'tis a madneſs for you to venture upon ſtealing, purely in hopes of lying hid from one Mans Eyes, when at the ſame time you know you are your ſelf falſe, and know that God ſees and knows ſo too; and that the torment of Guilt ariſes from a Mans own Conſcience, and the fear of Puniſhment from Gods being Witneſs, as he is to be the Avenger, of your ſecret Villanies. With the fruits of your Injuſtice, you may gratifie ſome vain or wicked longing for the preſent, but when that is over, the Mind is immediately concern'd, vex'd, and diſquieted, at what is done; wiſhes it had been let alone, is afraid of Shame and Diſcovery, and knows that fact muſt be repented of; this is much more uneaſie, than the diſappointment and denial of thoſe vain deſires had been at firſt: To have the mind perpetually burthened with the remembrance of its Guilt, to live under conſtant reproaches of Conſcience, for having wrong'd and defrauded ones Maſter, who deſerved no ſuch Uſage, muſt needs be a greater trouble, than it could be, to have wanted that content and ſatisfaction, which was purchas'd by thoſe Thefts. And therefore 'tis but a ſad bargain that a falſe Servant drives, that for ſo little Profit, gives away the peace and quiet of his Mind. Diſ. XV.

He

Diſc. XV. He knows that God ſees him, and knows that he hath threatned to puniſh Falſehood and Injuſtice, with ſevere Puniſhment, yet this he alſo ventures. He is, and with reaſon enough, afraid of the Shame or Puniſhment that might follow a diſcovery of his Sins, from his Maſter here on Earth; but is not terrified enough, even with the certainty of Gods diſcerning him continually, and reſolution of puniſhing all ſuch wicked People. It were but fit he ſhould be more afraid of him, who can caſt both Soul and Body into Hell-fire.

Theſe are ſome of the Conſiderations that would ſtand Servants in the greateſt ſtead, if they were preſent to their Minds; they would ſhew them the baſeneſs and unworthineſs, as well as the wickedneſs and danger of being faithleſs and diſhoneſt Servants; and that would be the likelieſt means of keeping them juſt, and exact. The *Third and laſt* thing to be ſpoken to, is the Reaſon, Ground, and Foundation of the Servants paying all Obedience, and due Service to their Maſters, *Knowing that of the Lord, ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.* A good Servant may not only promiſe himſelf the natural and the uſual Rewards of an Induſtrious, Careful, Juſt and Faithful

ful Service, from his Earthy Maſter, and the reſt of the World, but alſo the Reward of the Inheritance at Gods Hands, *for he ſerves the Lord Chriſt*, one who in the form of a Servant, diſdained not to live and die for the meaneſt of Mankind, who hath promiſed Gods favour, both here and hereafter, to ſuch as do their Duties in the meaneſt Stations faithfully and truly, and one who is enabled to perform his Promiſes to them. Good Service does, like other good Performances, pay it ſelf in great meaſure; it carries its Reward with it: It gains the favour and eſteem of all People; Care and Diligence, and Faith and Honeſty, make their Service very acceptable, and conſequently very eaſie to themſelves, and recommend them upon all occaſions; thoſe good Qualities raiſe them above their Fortune, and give them Reputation and Good-will, that make amends for the meanneſs of their Condition. They give them credit moreover with all that know them; they who have ſerv'd their Maſters honeſtly and well, have laid to themſelves a good foundation for their own Self-Subſiſtence when they have occaſion; the Neighbourhood will remember ſtill their Diligence and Honeſty, and promote their Good, by giving a good Report of them, they will be forwarded Dif. XV.

Diſc. XV. warded by all, and truſted, more than others of greater skill, and deeper inſight. Faithfulneſs and Honeſty, give Servants better Credit, than Induſtry and Labour; becauſe that People naturally expect a Bleſſing ſhould attend them; they think, and not without ſome reaſon, that God is intereſted in their favour and behalf; they will rather leave room for Providence, and truſt to Honeſty and Juſtice, than favour the Skillful and Induſtrious, although they know no harm by them, but are not certain of the other good Qualities; but when they are all joyn'd, there is then no queſtion of their doing well.

Theſe are Conſiderations that may help to alleviate their Misfortunes, and make their Condition eaſie to them. And, in truth, it is ſo well and wiſely order'd by God, that every Condition of Life has ſomething to make it not only tollerable, but comfortable enough, if People be not wanting to themſelves, but will be careful, honeſt and religious, and diſcharge the Duties of it, as they ſhould. The State of Servitude is accounted the meaneſt and the moſt miſerable of all others, but yet it is to be made eaſie, though not eligible. Servants may have more of the *Labours* of Life, but then they have leſs of the *Cares*, than other People; their *Bodies* are more fatigu'd

fatigu'd and exercis'd, but their *Minds* Diſc. XV.
are leſs perplex'd: They are only concern'd in *one* matter, to do the work that lies before them, whilſt others have a *world* of things to think on, and look after. *They* have their Maſters only to pleaſe; their Maſters, may be, are to court and humour all they deal with: They, generally ſpeaking, have themſelves alone to provide for; their Maſters have Wives and Children, and Relations. Whatever ſcarcity or dearneſs happens, *they* find but little Alteration; what-ever publick miſchiefs oppreſs a Nation, they feel but little of them: Changes of Government affect not them, that, may be, quite undoe and overthrow their Maſters; they contribute little to the Supporting of the Publick, pay no Rates nor Taxes; loſe no gainful Employments, ſuffer nothing by the Malice, or Inſolence of Parties, undergoe no Odium, Calumny, or Slander; in a word, they are leſs diſtreſs'd and ſtraitned, ſuffer leſs hardſhips and misfortunes, than any ſort of People elſe, above them. Theſe are Conveniencies that generally attend Servants of the loweſt Condition; and which they would do well to reflect on, now and then, as well to keep them the more eaſie, as to make them the more thankful, and that they might the better diſ-

Dis. XV. cern the kindness of Gods Providence, in ordering matters so, that, with these Advantages, their Condition, however mean and low it is to all appearance, is yet upon the square, for ease and happiness of Mind, with that of many of their Masters.

But when to all these natural Rewards, and these Advantages, some of them usual, and some inseparable from their condition of Life, we also add *the Reward of the Inheritance* promis'd by God to the careful and industrious, the faithful, just, and honest discharge of the Duty of Servants, there can be nothing wanting to excite them to a due performance of it.

Let them therefore, for their Comfort, and Encouragement, think upon these things. The state of Servitude is absolutely necessary, by the order and appointment of the wise Creator and Disposer of all things; the World cou'd not be govern'd and maintain'd without it; and it is fallen to their share, to be instrumental to the publick good in that Station; not for their *own*, nor for the Sins of their Fathers, but by that uncertainty of Affairs, that God for wise and good, but undiscover'd, Reasons, permits to be in the World; it is no token of his Anger and Displeasure,

for

for he is willing they should avoid and fly Dis. XV.
that fortune by their Industry and Care, and blesses them with Opportunities, and gives them the same Abilities and natural faculties, he gives the Governors and Princes of the World: It is not therefore any sign of his Displeasure, that they are born, or became Servants, but so it happens, that they *are* so, and may free themselves from being so, as soon as they can: He only commands them, that whilst they continue so, they should behave themselves as becomes their Condition, with all Submission and Humility, with all Obedience, Diligence, and Industry, with Truth, and Justice, Faithfulness and Honesty; which will make their Condition easie to themselves, and cause them to be well serv'd by others, when-ever they emerge and get above it. But to shew how acceptable it is to him, and (because it is so necessary and useful to the World) to encourage it, he promises, that they who behave themselves well in this Life, as *Servants*, shall be look'd upon, and treated as *Children*, in the Life to come, they shall have *the Reward of Inheritance*, which is, what properly belongs to Gods Children. They may make themselves as happy as they can, in this World, and the doing their Duty well, is the most likely means

Dis. XV. of being so. But however that happen, God will not fail of making them happy hereafter; if they perform their Duty here, he will reward their Labours with eternal Rest and Quiet, and their Faith and Honesty, with Rewards that never fail, they shall be happy in the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, whatever hardships, trouble and uneasiness they undergoe, whatever want of necessaries or conveniencies they suffer; whatever severities or cruel inflictions they endure *here*, by the undue rigour of their Masters and Superiours; *there* they shall have amends and satisfaction made them, in most ample manner, when once their Service is accomplished, they shall receive double at the Lords Hands for all their Sufferings, and their undeserv'd Misfortunes. Let them support themselves under the worst of their Condition, with this hope and expectation, and make it but a *reasonable* Hope, and a well-*grounded* Expectation, by discharging their Duty carefully and honestly as they should, and then they will live easily; they will have the earnest of Heaven, in a good Conscience beforehand, and live and be more happy than their Masters, if they are not also good Men.

There

There are two things, in this Divine Conduct, worthy the remarking. *First*, that no Duty of life if well discharg'd, will go without Reward; it is not enough that to be a good Relation in all respects, will make Men happy naturally, if all the World would do their Duty, for if all Men did their Duty to each other, all Men would be happy: But because some People will be foolish and unreasonable, some ill-natur'd and perverse, some obstinately wicked, and unjust; and by these means a great many Duties be neglected, slighted, and defied, to the great damage and mischief of others, to their misfortune and great suffering, and that it is but natural, and seems reasonable, for one Party to neglect and omit the Duty which they owe *to* others, when they can see no tollerable returns of what Duty is due to them *from* others; Because of this, because that such omissions and neglects are prejudicial to the peace and welfare of the World, God promises Rewards in another Life, to the faithful and religious dischargers of their Duties here, that will make amends for what is denied them here, by Mens unreasonableness, or malice, their ingratitude, or their great wickedness, so that no one need to be discourag'd now, as tho' his labours would be in vain. Good Subjects Dis. XV.

Dis. XV. may have lawless Governors; and good Children, unnatural Parents; and good Wives unkind and faithless Husbands; and good Servants hard and unreasonable Masters; and so on the other hand, these several Superiours may have their corresponding Inferiours all as naught: But the good of Mankind requires that all these mutual Duties should be well perform'd, and yet to do good for evil, is a huge discouragement, and all these Duties would not be perform'd, unless Men had a hopeful prospect of some Recompence, some-where or other, to excite them to discharge them, and support them whilst so doing. This prospect God lays open to all the World, by giving them the hopes of Heaven, that happy Country, of which, they who will be his Children, in Obedience, shall, for reward thereof, be made Inheritors, and Heirs for ever.

The *other thing* worthy remark, is this; that whatever difference and distinction God commands or permits to be amongst Men, yet the greatest Favours and Blessings, the truest Dignities and Honours are common to all, and those are Graces and Virtues here, and Happiness in Heaven hereafter. All Men cannot possibly be Great and Honourable, nor be possess'd of places of Advantage, all Men never

never can be Rich, all Men cann't be Governours and Masters, nor great Traders, nor remarkable in any Faculty; but all Men may be Just and Honest, Virtuous and Religious, all Men may live in Gods favour in this World, and may thereby be happy in the other; all Men cannot have Houses or Lands, Estates and Honours here, but all may have their everlasting Dwellings, Houses not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. All Men may be Partakers of those Blessings, which God, who knows us best; knows fittest for us, which he assures us are the truest blessings, which make and keep us happiest here, and which he has design'd to crown us with hereafter. This is no little thing for Servants to consider, that however mean and despicable their Condition may appear in the sight of Men, yet that in Gods Eyes, who understands the value of his Creatures best, they are of equal worth with the great and noble; that he has given them Bodies full as beautiful and useful, faculties of mind as fine and good, made them as capable of being virtuous, and exercising Graces, has redeem'd them with the same precious Blood of Christ, opened the same gates of Heaven, and prepar'd for them the same Glory. Only they must behave themselves wisely and well in their Condi- Dis. XV.

Diſc. XV. tion, and as becomes thoſe *that ſerve the Lord Chriſt*, *i. e.* who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians. He is the common Maſter of the whole World, and 'tis to him his Servants muſt look up; him they muſt firſt and principally obey; and under him, their ſeveral Maſters and Superiours, as he gives them Order and Command; 'tis he to whom the Father has committed all Power; the diſpenſation of Rewards and Puniſhments is in his Hands; and 'tis by his Commands and Rules, that he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs; accordingly as Men obey his Laws, and diſcharge the ſeveral Duties of this Life, in their diſtinct Relations, they ſhall fare in the other, whether they be High or Low, Great or Small, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free, Maſter or Servant, *for with him there is no reſpect of Perſons.*

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe XVI.

Coloſſians iv. Verſe 1.

Maſters give unto your Servants, that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven.

ST. *Paul* in delivering the Duties that Superiours owe to their Inferiours, is very careful to preſerve the decorum of things, and generally uſes ſuch terms as might ſeem to imply that the diſcharge of *their* Part, is a matter of mere Grace and Favour, rather than of Debt or Juſtice. *Rulers are not a terror to good Works, but to the evil. Husbands love your Wives. Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath. Maſters give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal.* Whereas to all Inferiours he ſpeaks in a commanding louder tone, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers: Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own Husbands: Children obey your Parents, in all things; and Servants obey your Maſters in all things.* But yet it would be a wrong Inference, that any one ſhould make from hence, that therefore St. *Paul* intends to bind

Dis. XVI. bind Inferiours to *their* Duties, closelier and stronglier than Superiours to *theirs*; for his purpose is to bind them both alike, to the discharge of all they owe: Only, the nature of their several Duties requires a different Carriage and Behaviour in the manner of discharging them; and indeed the way and manner is sometimes part of the Duty.

There is nothing more certain, than that Superiours are oblig'd as much in Reason, and Justice, and by Gods Commands, to discharge what they owe to their Inferiours, as Inferiours are to discharge what they owe to their Superiours. For every Relation being built, and depending on a Contract, either suppos'd in Nature and Reason, or actually agreed upon and made betwixt the Parties related, upon what terms they found convenient; it must needs be, that each Party is equally oblig'd to perform his part of the Contract, upon which the Relation stands: For Justice and Religion know no difference of Parties or Relations; with them (as with their everlasting Fountain) there is no respect of Persons: They only have regard to what the agreement is, and how it is perform'd. These things have been fully spoken to, in considering the several Relations People stand to one another in; and

and therefore having urg'd the Duty of Servants to their Masters, from Reason and Gods Commands, it is but fit the Masters should be put in mind of what they owe their Servants, and that I choose to do, from the words of St. *Paul* in the Text. *Masters give unto your Servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.* In which words we have to consider, *First*, What is to be understood by *Just and Equal. Secondly*, The reason here assign'd why Masters should give to their Servants *that which is just and equal*, and that is, the knowledge they have, that *they also have a Master in Heaven.* Dis. XVI.

First, What is to be understood by *just and equal.* It is not indeed necessary that when two or more Epithets of pretty near the same Sense and Signification, are attributed to one and the same thing or Person, there should be a different sense sought out for each Epithet; the Scriptures use a great many words to signifie the same thing, but to signifie it with more force, and to make the deeper impression on the mind of the Reader; and so do all other Books as well as that; and so do all Men in their common Conversation, and cannot possibly avoid it; it does not signifie that they intend to say different things, when

Diſ. XVI.

when they ſay that ſuch a one is an *honeſt* and a *good* Man, they make no difference in their minds, betwixt an *honeſt* and a *good* Man, but they would only have it believ'd that he is *either*; and either of them ſerves their turn; and the uſing of both, is only to ſhew they are in earneſt. And ſo there is no abſolute neceſſity, that to deal *juſtly* and *equally*, ſhould ſignifie different things, but only *very* juſtly, or *very* equally; but if there be any difference intended by St. *Paul*, then it may be reaſonable, to think, that when Maſters are bidden to be juſt, or *to give that which is juſt to their Servants*, they are bidden to give them, that which is theirs by Contract and Agreement, that which is due in Law, as being bargain'd for, upon ſuch and ſuch terms; and when they are bidden to give them that which is *equal*, they are bidden to deal fairly, honeſtly, and kindly with them, to give them what is their due in Reaſon and Conſcience, although they have not formally contracted with them; to uſe them as well as other People, merciful and juſt, are ſuppos'd to uſe *theirs*, and as well, as it may be ſuppos'd the Servants would have agreed for, had they ſuſpected otherwiſe. In a word, to look upon themſelves as much oblig'd in Reaſon and Conſcience,

as

as they would be by Bond and solemn Contract. Dis. XVI.

It is plain, there may be a great deal of difference betwixt *Justice*, and *Equity*, if Men so please. Whilst they make their Contracts and Agreements the measure of *Justice*; and Reason and Conscience the Rule of determining what is *equal*. In this difference, we may well consider the Duty of Masters as somewhat different in being *Just*, and being *Equal*; and *First*, they are commanded to be *Just*, to stand to their Agreements, to give their Servants what they have contracted for, whether it be Instruction, Wages, Maintenance, or Cloathing, or whatever else is bargain'd for. Undoubtedly, whatever is agreed for, is in Justice due; and therefore whatsoever Information or Instruction is requisite to qualifie a Servant for the Calling and Profession he pretends to, is to be given him, as is due, and cannot be withholden from him; it is the end which Servants of that sort propose and aim at, and the very reason of putting themselves into a state of Servitude; it is that for which especially they contract; for which they give their Money, Time, and Labour; and therefore 'tis a piece of great Injustice, to conceal the Skill that properly belongs to them, and is to make them Masters

Dis. XVI.

sters of their Calling; they cannot answer to their Contract, without the letting their Servants into the full knowledge of their Business, according to the measure of their Understanding and Capacity; it is as much their due, as their daily Food, and detain'd with equal, if not greater, Injury.

A Master therefore is both faithless and unjust, that either through design, envy, or carelessness, suffers his Servant to continue ignorant and unskilful in the way of his Profession, which he agreed and covenanted to make him understand; he breaks his Covenant, and answers not his Trust, by keeping back the Skill that is necessary to make his Servant what he aims at. The Servant is all the while deceiv'd, and loses the only thing he bargain'd for, expected, and desir'd, and for which he pledg'd his Faith and Service. This is *one* way of refusing to give to Servants *that which is just*, and that, a very great and mischievous one.

Another is of denying them their Wages, the with-holding back the price and reward of their Service, that which they bargain'd and agreed for; which is as much the Servants due, as any thing the Master has is his own; he has already paid for it, and to defraud him of it, is to rob him

of

of just as much. It is indeed in the Masters keeping, but it is no more *his*, than any Strangers: The Master sold it, for so much Time and Labour, as the Servant and he agreed for, which being paid for by the Servants Work, it is then his own. A Master may as well agree for Goods with any Customer, and receive the price of them beforehand, and after that detain the Goods also, as take his Servants Time and Labour first, and then deny him his appointed Wages. There is nothing plainer, and better understood, than the reasonableness and justice of standing to Agreements, such especially as were deliberately made, and which have been perform'd without fraud on the one part, and yet there is reason to think, this part of Justice is very ill practis'd by many Masters to their Servants, as if they did not owe the same to *them*, as to their Betters. Some such idle fancy must possess them, that Superiors are not equally oblig'd by contracting with Inferiors, as they are with equals, for otherwise they would be as just to Servants, as to any one else. That which may make one easily conjecture thus, is, that the higher we go, the better quality and fashion People are of, the more they are observ'd to offend against this part of Justice, the less regard

Dis. XVI.

Diſ. XVI. gard they have to the diſcharge of what is due by contract to their Servants. So that that which ſhould be both to their Honour and Advantage (the ſerving Great People) turns to their greater loſs and miſchief, they are thereby only more injur'd and oppreſs'd: For this additional guilt, the honour and great quality of Maſters add to *Injuſtice*, that they make it alſo Oppreſſion. It is *Injuſtice* to deny what is the Servants due, but when the Servants cannot by the legal common Courſes, obtain that due, through the great power and Titles of their Maſters, then are they alſo *oppreſs'd* as well as *wrong'd*. It were ſome ſhame to ſay, that either Law, or Cuſtom, ſhould encourage, or ſhould juſtifie Oppreſſion, for Juſtice is to ſit the higheſt in the World.

It might contribute to the doing this ſort of Juſtice, to conſider, that they who are backwardeſt to do it, are commonly the worſt ſerv'd; they are often met with, though in a very faulty manner; for whilſt the Servants live *with* them, they commonly live *upon* them; *i. e.* they find out ways to pay themſelves with Intereſt, but it is by frauds and villanies, by allowing great rates to ſuch as deal with them, by being ill-husbands for them, by going ſhares with thoſe that gain from them,

and

and by a world of little courſes that are falſe and wicked; one injuſtice begets another; and though an unjuſt Maſter will not *excuſe* a falſe and wicked Servant, yet he oft *occaſions* it, by ſhewing him the way, and putting him upon ſome kind of neceſſity of living by ſuch ſhifts; and therefore the ſureſt way of being well ſerv'd, is to be very juſt, to ſtand exactly to agreements, and to give them their own; that makes them diligent and faithful, and gives them no temptation to be otherwiſe; whereas when that which of right belongs to them is denied them, they *firſt* imagine they may do themſelves Juſtice, and *then*, by degrees, they give themſelves great Reparations. Thus by being ill us'd, they become wicked. Againſt this Injuſtice, God, in the Scriptures, gives Men frequent warning. Thus in *Lev.* 19. 13. and *Deut.* 24. 14. *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired Servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy Brethren or of thy Strangers, that are in thy Land, within thy Gates. At his day thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it, leſt he cry againſt thee to the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.* The hardſhip is indeed the greater, in detaining the Wages of poor Men who dai-

Diſ. XVI.

Diſ. XVI. ly ſubſiſt by their Labours, but the Injuſtice is the ſame, whether you bargain by the Day or Year, in detaining their hire from them. So in *Jer.* 22. 13. *Wo unto him that buildeth his Houſe by Unrighteouſneſs, and his Chambers by Wrong, that uſeth his Neighbours ſervice without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work.* Undoubtedly, this Woe belongs to all that defraud their Servants of their Wages, for they are *Neighbours* in the Scripture-ſenſe of that word, and they receive the profit and advantage of their Work and Service, and therefore ought to pay them for the ſame. So ſaith St. *James*, ver. 5.4. *Behold the hire of the Labourers, who have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by fraud crieth, and their Cries have entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.* The keeping back the hire of *other*, and *all*, Labourers, as well as Reapers, will crie unto God, and enter into his Ears; the Cruelty and Injuſtice is all alike, and the Offence the ſame; and therefore they who make conſcience of paying the *Day-Labourers*, ſhould alſo know they are oblig'd to deal as juſtly by their *Menial-Servants*, who alſo labour for them day by day. It is the ſame caſe with Food and Raiment, with any profit or convenience that the Servant has contracted for; it is in juſtice due

due to him, and muſt not be with-holden from him. When he has earn'd it, it is *his*, and his inability of recovering it, by Might, or Law, makes it not leſs his due, than if he were actually poſſeſs'd of it. And the Injuſtice of detaining from Inferiours, weak and helpleſs, is rais'd and aggravated by that Conſideration, becauſe there is Inſolence and Unmercifulneſs joyn'd with it. When they have nothing to oppoſe or anſwer to the Right and Juſtice of the Servants and Inferiours Claim, they have recourſe to Power and Might, they are Richer, Greater, and have more Friends and Intereſt, and by their help they trample over Juſtice; nothing can betray a worſer mind than this, to oppreſs the weak and helpleſs, either becauſe they are ignorant of the means of recovering their Dues, or unable to go through the trouble, or bear the charge, of doing it; this is to take the advantage of Mens weakneſs, which ought much rather to provoke their pity and compaſſion, and make them friends and Patrons. Diſ. XVI.

Theſe and whatever elſe Particulars, are due to Servants by Contract and Agreement, may well be thought meant and intended by St. *Paul*, when he commands the Maſters to give to Servants that which is *Juſt*.

Dis. XVI.

The other part of what he commands, is to give them that which is *equal*, *i.e.* to deal fairly, honestly, and kindly with them, to give them that which is their due in Reason and Conscience, although they have not formally contracted for it; and this may include all the Particulars above-mentioned, which were due in Justice, and recoverable by the force of Law; for a Man may be as unjust in detaining that which the Law would not compel him to deliver, as that which it would force from him, and give to the true Owner. It is the reason and benefit of the Contract, that makes it at first binding, and obliges the Conscience to make it good, before the penalty of Laws come to be considered; if one Man borrows Money of another, he knows he is oblig'd in Conscience to repay him, altho' he is not under formal bonds to do it; the benefit he receives he knows is naturally conditional, and requires the being answered in the like kind, which he on his part promises, and the other expects; the Bond that afterwards succeeds, is to constrain him to do that Justice, which his own Conscience told him he must do, without constraint. It is therefore evident, that where the reason and benefit of a Contract appear, there the Conscience is

Diſ. XVI.

is equally oblig'd to ſtand to it, and make it good, as if it were never ſo formally made in words, and tied by Penalties; for though all Contracts naturally ſuppoſe mutual Promiſes and Engagements, yet the bottom and foundation of thoſe Promiſes, is the ſenſe of ſome *Benefit* receiv'd, or the hope and preſumption of ſome *to be* receiv'd, and therefore *that* is the Obligation at the bottom. And therefore there is a *preſum'd* Contract, where-ever the beneficial effects of one appear, although there be no formal one actually made. If therefore a Maſter receive the advantage of his Servants Time and Labour, he is oblig'd in Conſcience to make him a ſufficient Recompence, although there were no bargain formally made between them; this the Conſcience ſays is *equal*, becauſe the reaſon and benefits of a Contract viſibly appear. This Rule is not only applicable to *Maſters*, with regard to their Servants, but indeed to all Mankind with reſpect to one another. The Mind may be in chains and fetters where the Body is, and muſt be free; the Conſcience often is obliged, where the Forms of Juſtice can take no hold on him, ſo that there are more Priſoners than we ſee or think of: Many that walk at liberty, and ſeem to be as free as the Air they breath in, that

Diſ. XVI.

yet know within themſelves, that they are truly Priſoners, and due to Juſtice, though they elude it by ſome ſlight or falſehood. They know they are oblig'd in Reaſon and Juſtice, and good Conſcience, to diſcharge a great many Debts, which yet no Evidence, no Judge or Jury can extort from them, their credit may be, was ſo great, that they gave no Bond: Their reputed honeſty was ſuch, that Men were glad to deal with them, upon their own terms: Or elſe they mortgag'd doubly, gave falſe Security, or ſo contriv'd their Obligations, that they ſhould be inſignificant, when tried. The Juſtice of the Laws perſues with hatred and abhorrence all theſe wicked Proceedings, but the ſubtilty of wicked and deſigning People is too much for them, they triumph in her weakneſs and their own skill, and in contempt of her, walk at great liberty; but 'tis the liberty of *Body* only, for the *Mind* is all that while in Bonds, and knows its Obligations, knows what is truly juſt and equal, with reſpect to Reaſon and Conſcience, however it eſcape the Cognizance or Penalties of Laws.

But by *equal* is alſo to be underſtood ſuch uſage and treatment as is fair, good-natur'd, and humane; to make their lives as eaſie as we can, conſiſtently with the per-

performance of their duty and our buſi- Diſ.
neſs; and therefore not to perſue them XVI.
with perpetual contumely and reproach, nor uſe them as we do our Beaſts of burthen. It is one of the worſt ways in the World of ſhewing our Superiority by giving ill Language, and words that become no body, to receive. The condition of Servitude is of it ſelf grievous enough, without the additional evil of being on all occaſions treated with contempt and ſcorn; and if the truth were known, the Service is not the better perform'd, for ſuch perpetual chidings and upbraidings, eſpecially in ſo unſeemly a manner. The nature of our Country is not ſo vile and diſingenuous, as always to want ſuch galling Spurs and ſharp Excitements, to the performance of the Servants Duties. Good words at leaſt ſhould be the firſt Experiment that all Superiours ſhould make, and be as long continued as they can, they are ſo handſom and becoming Reaſonable and Religious People; and to be ſure thoſe Servants that perform their Duty, do it better with good words, and live more comfortably; and without doubt, thoſe means are fitteſt to be us'd, that beſt attain their end, with the eaſe and pleaſure of both Parties.

Dis. XVI.

To this comfort of good words, must also be added *good usage*, Masters must not be over-rigorous in their Punishments, when Servants are faulty, but should inflict them with Deliberation, good Intention, and Compassion. Anger produces often sad effects, even where it prompts the *Parents* to correct the *Children*, and therefore must be carefully attended to, where that affection is not present to restrain them from exceeding the bounds of moderation; this is also to give them what is *equal*. The Masters owe their Servants Admonition and Reproof when they are found faulty, and Punishments proportion'd to their Guilt. To this moderation Masters also are to have regard in their Commands and Impositions; they must not oppress them with immoderate Tasks and Labour, but are to have a merciful respect to the Capacity, Ability and Strength of Servants. It was one occasion of the Institution of the Sabbath to the *Jews*, that Servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable life in constant and continued Labours.

It is true, that the Servants Time and Labour are the Masters, and he is to give them to no ones use besides: But yet they are to be exacted with Equity and Reason. Men must not wear out the Heart, nor

nor make all waſt they can of what is truly let out to them, although it be not expreſly covenanted againſt, becauſe it is preſum'd in Reaſon and good Senſe, that others are to ſucceed in the poſſeſſion of thoſe Lands. A Servant is not ſo to be conſum'd with toil, as to be made unfit for other, or for farther Service: He is not preſum'd to conſent to ſuch a Bargain, though all his time and labour ſtill belongs to his Maſter. They are therefore very much to blame, that have no conſideration of their Servants, that never think they do enough, but are continually charging them with new Tasks, without any reſt or intermiſſion; this is not dealing *equally* with them. Diſ. XVI.

But, farthermore, under this Head may well be comprehended, all other care that is fit to be taken of them, both in their Health and Sickneſs, the giving them good Advice, and ſetting them a good Example, affording them opportunities of ſerving God, both at home and abroad, the inſtructing them according to their leiſure and abilities in the common Rules of Honeſty and Juſtice, Truth and Faithfulneſs, exciting them to Diligence and Induſtry, and encouraging them therein, and, in a word, to make them Virtuous and Religious, that they may be as uſeful in the World

Diſ. XVI.

World as they can; and to ſee, in caſe of Sickneſs, that they want not what is fitting their Condition: Theſe are courſes that are likely to make good Servants, and to encourage ſuch as are ſo, and to oblige them to ſerve their Maſters with the greateſt care and affection poſſible; there being none of ſo low and abject a Spirit, but who will ſtrive to make amends for kind good-natur'd uſage.

All theſe Particulars may well be underſtood to be injoyned by St. *Paul*, when he would have the Maſters *give their Servants that which is juſt and equal.*

The Reaſon here aſſign'd, why they ſhould do ſo, is next to be conſider'd, and that is, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven.* To make which words a binding Reaſon to Maſters, they are to contain, either a Promiſe of encouragement to ſuch as give to their Servants *that which is juſt and equal*, or Threatning to ſuch as ſhall neglect the doing it. And conſidering who this Maſter is, the Lord Chriſt, he that ſhall judge the quick and dead, with whom there is no reſpect of Perſons, who is to puniſh and reward; conſidering this, 'tis certain that the words intend them both, namely, an Encouragement to thoſe that ſhall comply with the Command, and Threatning to ſuch as ſhall neg-

neglect it. As they contain an encouragement, they may be underſtood thus, *Maſters, give to your Servants that which is juſt and equal, knowing*, or remembring, *that ye have alſo a Maſter in Heaven.* One from whom you expect the juſt performance of all thoſe great and precious Promiſes, which, of his grace and goodneſs, he at any time hath made to you; and one from whom you look for all the Mercies and Benefits both Temporal and Spiritual, that are either fit for him to give, or for you to receive: And one who hath promiſed to be a bounteous *Maſter*, to all his faithful and obedient *Servants*, to ſhew mercy to ſuch as ſhew mercy to others; he took upon himſelf the form of a Servant, and liv'd a mean precarious life, depending, for ought that appears, upon the charity and friendſhip of good People, for his Subſiſtence, and on the entertainments his Doctrine gain'd him, and therefore hath exempted that, and every other poor and mean Condition, from contumely and reproach among Chriſtians, and made them rather, for his ſake, Objects of great Pity and Compaſſion. *Behold* ſaith our Saviour *I am among you, as he that ſerveth*, not only to give his Diſciples an example of humility and condeſcending, now and then, on juſt occaſions, below their

Diſ. XVI.

Diſ. XVI. their outward State and Quality, when it is to be ſerviceable to one another, but to ſanctifie all Conditions of life, and to ſhew the World, that God looks not with Mans Eyes, that he has no reſpect to Perſons, that he regards not Birth and Fortune, Quality and Title, but that the meaneſt People in the World are acceptable with him, if they obey his Laws, and do his Will; that it is Goodneſs, Virtue, and Religion, that recommend Men to his favour, and nothing elſe, of which the Poor and Servants of this World are full as capable as the Rich, and Mighty, and moſt honourable Maſters. And as he hath made them partakers of the ſame Grace here, and capable of the ſame Glory hereafter, ſo he commands them to be treated here with all the Mercy and Humanity that their Condition is capable of receiving; upon this Principle, no doubt, that all the World ſhould be as happy as they can; and this is that, that every ſingle Perſon in the World ſhould govern himſelf by, to make each ſingle Creature in the World, as eaſie and as happy as he can, in the Condition he is in; not to Moleſt, Afflict, or Injure any one, but to do all Juſtice, and to ſhew all Mercy we are able, conſiſtent with our own benefit, and that of thoſe to whom we are more immediately

ately related. Our *Maſter, that is in Heaven*, hath, by his Laws, conſulted better the eaſe and benefit of all Inferiour Relations of Men, than either *Jewiſh*, *Greek*, or *Roman* Lawgivers have ever done; their Condition is much more happy under Chriſtianity, than any other Diſpenſation. The State of Subjects under their Princes, the ſubjection of Wives to their Husbands, of Children to their Parents, of Servants to their Maſters, is abundantly more eaſie by the Rules and Principles of that Religion, than to any People elſe, *i. e.* Chriſtianity hath provided better for their eaſe and comfort, if thoſe that are concern'd will follow its Directions. Chriſtianity does not barely leave theſe things to the Civil Laws and Cuſtoms of the Country, but it gives new Orders in their favour; where Laws and Cuſtoms are unrighteous, cruel, and unreaſonable, againſt them, it mitigates them, and commands its Proſelites to change them for good-natur'd, juſt, and reaſonable ones; in a word, Chriſtianity is the beſt Religion that ever was, for the good of Mankind, it beſt ſecures the Rights and Honours, Priviledges and Advantages of all Superiours, and beſt conſults the eaſe and happineſs of all Inferiours, by the moſt ſtrict and indiſpenſible Obligations it lays on all Men, to be exceeding

Diſ. XVI.

ing

Diſ. XVI.

ing Juſt and Merciful, and to diſcharge their ſeveral Duties to each other, with the utmoſt care and faithfulneſs that can be. And this it does, beyond all other Diſpenſations, by Promiſes of Grace and Favour here, and mighty Recompences in the World to come, of which our Lord and Maſter is to be the Judge and ſole Diſpenſer.

This end it alſo aims at, and perſues, by the threatnings of the greateſt Puniſhment to ſuch as ſhall neglect their ſeveral Duties; for that is alſo implied in the words of the Text, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter that is in Heaven.* Do what becomes you, to your Servants, give them that which is juſt and equal, remembring that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven, that commands you ſo to do, and who will alſo, one day, take account how ye have done it. With this your Maſter there is no reſpect of Perſons; the bond and free are all alike to him; the meaneſt Servant is as dear to him, as the moſt honourable Maſter; all ſhall be judg'd alike, and moſt impartially: The falſe and diſobedient Servants ſhall be puniſh'd, and ſo ſhall all unjuſt and cruel Maſters.

Now what can ſhew the excellence and uſefulneſs of the Chriſtian Religion better, than the care it takes to ſecure the happi-

happineſs of all the World, by ſecuring the Duties of all Relations, Natural and Civil, by ſuch Rewards and Puniſhments? Be but a juſt and good Prince, and you ſhall be belov'd and fear'd by all your Subjects; be an obedient Subject, and you ſhall live ſecure, if not, expect the Rods and Axes. Be a good Father, and you ſhall have obedient Children, and receive great comfort from them; be a good Son, and you ſhall be belov'd by your Parents and all that know you; be diſobedient and rebellious, and you ſhall be rejected, diſinherited, impriſoned, and it may be puniſh'd farther. Be a good Husband and you ſhall live eaſily, and be belov'd and honour'd by your Wife, be an unkind or falſe one, and you ſhall be hated and ill-ſpoken of. Be a good Wife, and ye ſhall be belov'd and prais'd, be a bad one, you ſhall be ill us'd, or elſe divorced: Be a good Maſter, and you ſhall be well ſerv'd, be an unjuſt and cruel one, and all ſhall hate you, and fly from you: Be a good Servant, and you ſhall be well us'd, be a bad and faithleſs one, and expect the Mill, the Mines, or a Halter. Theſe are the hopes, and theſe the fears, that other Laws and Diſpenſations hold out; theſe are the Promiſes, and theſe the Threats that are to bind Men to their ſeveral Duties, and

Diſ. XVI.

to

Diſ. XVI. to deter them from neglecting them; but what ſecurity is this, to what the Chriſtian Doctrine offers, when to the faithful, juſt, and true diſcharge of all Mens Duties, it offers all the natural Advantages of doing well, and Everlaſting Life in happineſs beſides? and to the free contempt and neglect of all theſe ſeveral Duties, to all the natural inconveniencies and miſchiefs of doing ill, it threatens endleſs and amazing Puniſhments? What ſtrange encouragements to good Morality are theſe, what ſtrange diſcouragements to bad? Allow it but (as well you may) that the true and honeſt diſcharge of every Mans Duty to each other, in the Relation they ſtand in, is the ſureſt way of making and keeping all Men eaſie and happy throughout the World, and you will ſee that nothing ever ſo conſulted the good of all Mankind, even in this life, as the Chriſtian Religion. For had the Legiſlator and the Moraliſts of all Countries and all Ages, delivered the ſame Leſſons with thoſe of Chriſt, yet not being able to bring to light this Immortality of life in Pleaſure, or in Pain, they muſt have talked but finely to little purpoſe; and all their Laws have wanted the moſt powerful Sanction. This alſo ſhews how great a part (almoſt indeed the whole) of true Religion, good

Morality

Morality makes up, to which the Rewards discovered by especial Revelation are affixt, and to the neglect of which the Punishments reveal'd are also threatned. Let no one, therefore, think it so indifferent a thing, whether they well or ill discharge the Duties of their several Relations, for if Religion were divided into parts, the Duties that we owe to one another, would make up five of six, and Heaven and Hell, we see, are to reward their good performance, and punish the neglect of them. And let a Man take care to have a due regard to Justice, if a Magistrate, and live in obedience to the Laws as a good Subject, approve himself a dutiful Son to his Parents, and a good Parent to his Children; a faithful and good-natur'd, careful Husband to his Wife; a just and equal Master to his Servants, and a good, diligent and honest Servant to his Masters, let him discharge with care and good Conscience the Duties of his different Relations, and see how much he will want of being a good Christian: If these were well perform'd, the rest of our Religion would go down with ease; the Scruples and Objections made to *Doctrines*, would go near to vanish, if our disorderly Affections and our Will, were once subdued to Reason, and we were truly just and honest Men, and, to speak

Dis. XVI.

Dis. XVI.

in fashion, *Men of great Probity, and good Morals:* for that indeed is the very life and substance of Christ's Religion; and in the sense and full persuasion of this, I have been so long insisting on the several Duties that we owe to one another, and with which I have now done.

Discourse

Diſcourſe XVII.

II. Samuel xvii. Verſe. 23.

And when Ahithophel *ſaw that his Counſel was not followed, he ſadled his Aſs, and aroſe, and gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order, and hang'd himſelf, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

THeſe words contain a plain account of what happen'd to a moſt unfortunate, and wicked Man; and to make them as uſeful as I can, I think it will be beſt to treat of them in this Order. *Firſt*, To ſpeak to the diſaſtrous End *Ahithophel* came to, *he hang'd himſelf and died. Secondly*, To the occaſion of it, *he ſaw that his Counſel was not followed. Thirdly*, Something previous to his execution, *he aroſe, gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order*; and *Fourthly*, to what followed, *he was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

Diſ. XVII

Firſt, The diſaſtrous End that *Ahithophel* came to, was, that *he hang'd himſelf*. This was a Death of Infamy, and allotted by the Laws to great Maleſactors; and therefore it is ſaid, *Deut.* 21. 23. *He that is hanged, is accurſed of God*; not for dying, but for deſerving to die, in that manner. It was his Crime, not Puniſhment, that made him *accurſed of God*; his being hanged on a Tree, was to denote ſome great Offence that deſerv'd that Puniſhment, and for which he had incurr'd the Divine Diſpleaſure. And ſo, when our Saviour is ſaid to be made a Curſe for us, by dying on the Croſs (which St. *Peter*, in *Acts* 10. 39. calls, *hanging on a Tree*) it is with reſpect to this Sentence of the Law, in *Deut.* he bare our Sins, and was put to the like Death, and underwent the like Ignominy with thoſe Offenders, who, under the Law, were *accurſed of God*. This Death, *Ahithophel* underwent, not by any Sentence of Law, but by his Choice, upon ſome private Conſideration; and tho' he avoided the Ignominy of ſuch a *Sentence*, yet the Ignominy of *the Death* was not to be avoided; becauſe it was accounted an ignominous and accurſed Death, and was appointed for notorious Malefactors. But the uſe we may make of his chooſing this Particular, rather than any other, way

of

of dying, is very little, unleſs we may obſerve, how far the wiſeſt Men are blinded by their Paſſions, when to avoid ſome Shame, they run into courſes that directly lead to it. The thing to be principally conſider'd, is, not why he died in *this* manner, but why he died at all, what Right he had to put an end to his Life, by hanging himſelf: For, to do this, without blame, a Man muſt be at perfect liberty both by the Laws of God and Man, and independent on them both: There muſt be no Obligation on him, either from the Law of Nature and Right Reaſon, or from the Revealed Law of God, or from his lawful Superiours upon Earth: For if any of theſe with-hold his hands, he cannot innocently lay them on himſelf. Now as to the Law of Nature, condemning this Practice, I do not ſo much appeal to that innate love of Life, and fear of Death, which is generally implanted in all Mens Hearts (for theſe Men being freed from theſe Affections, will deny their Power) as to that general abhorrence that all Nations of the World have had that practice in: And the more wiſe, more civil and polite thoſe Nations have been eſteem'd, the more they have condemn'd it; which if it be not a proof of the reaſonableneſs of any Doctrine, we ſhall ne- Diſ. XVII.

Diſ. XVII.

ver find what is. And though there be a great many Examples both of *Greeks* and *Romans*, even in their beſt times, that fell by their own hands, upon ſome preſſing extremities, yet their *Rules*, their *Laws*, and their *Reaſonings*, were all againſt it. And thoſe Examples, againſt their Rules, are of no more Authority, to countenance ſuch a Practice, than the Example of Men committing any *other* Wickedneſs, will countenance ſuch other wickedneſs, againſt their Reaſon, and againſt expreſs Command of God. Their Rules and their Laws, were againſt Adultery, and Rapes, and Violence, Oppreſſion, Exaction, and all Injuſtice; and yet their great ones were guilty of them all, when they found their Opportunities; and their Hiſtorians often mention them without Reproach or Blame; and ſome were ſtill found, that would call their impure Liberties, *Gallantries*, and fine Freedoms; and their Oppreſſions *Conqueſts*; and their unjuſt Invaſions of Kingdoms, *glorious Ambition*, and enlargement of Empire; but a Man would be much miſtaken, if he thought that this was the judgment of their wiſe and ſober Writers, or of the grave and ſerious part that govern'd them, or that ſuch practices were countenanced by their Laws, and Rules of living. This I mention, to obvi-

obviate that Objection, that many paſſa- Diſ.
ges are found in the Writings of theſe Peo- XVII.
ple, in commendation of ſuch, as to a-
void ſome great Calamity, have put an end
to their lives by their own hands; for
that will always happen, that Men of looſe
Principles ſhould have falſe notions of Li-
berty, and Honour, and great Courage,
and ſhould accordingly commend ſuch
Practice as is conformable to ſuch looſe
Principles. And we, who live in an Age,
where every thing is juſtified by ſome
poor Writer or another, though never ſo
extravagant, impious, and unreaſonable,
ſhould not be hard to believe, that ſo it
has been heretofore with other People, and
ſo will be hereafter; and yet we ſhould
be loath to have Poſterity believe, that this
was the Senſe, the Reaſon, the Under-
ſtanding, and the Judgment of our Age,
in the general. We muſt conſult the Wiſe,
the Sober, and the Serious Writers of the
Times, the Laws, the Rules, and Reaſo-
nings of the grave and governing part of
a Nation, to underſtand their true ſenſe
of matters of Moment: And, from them
we ſhall learn, that *Self-murther* was ever-
more an abhorred practice among them;
that whatever pretence it made to great
Honour, Magnanimity and Courage, it was
indeed but an effect of Cowardice and

Diſ. XVII. Fear, and a mark of a poor impatient Spirit, that ſunk under the common calamities of Life, and knew not how to bear Misfortunes: That it was Diſobedience and Impiety, to deſert the Station, that their Supream Commander gave them to maintain, and act apparently againſt their Sovereigns order. I trouble you not with the Particulars, becauſe there is no need; 'tis certain, the Conſidering, Virtuous, and Religious part of Mankind, have all along been of this Opinion, and condemn'd the practice of thoſe, who to free themſelves from ſome Misfortunes, have ended their days, before their time, by Violence; and it would be no great wonder, if more Examples, and more Defenders of this Practice, were found among the *Gentiles*, than there are, becauſe they were, many of them, *Atheiſts*, or believers in ſo many Gods, that it almoſt came to the ſame thing; and to them who acknowledge no Supream Power, who governs the World, and to whom Men are accountable for what they do, 'tis a vain thing to talk of the Laws of Nature, and Right Reaſon; for let them be never ſo plain and clear, they will go for nothing, where they may be tranſgreſs'd without fear of being vindicated by any Power, or Puniſhment. And doubtleſs, if a Man believes

lieves he has no body hereafter to account to, he will fear no Maſter or Superiour here, from whom he knows he can eſcape ſo eaſily, by Death. But we are now ſuppoſing the belief of God, and upon that bottom, affirm, that a Man cannot be ſo much Maſter of his Life, as to throw it away at pleaſure, without regard to that Will of his, which appears to be written in our Hearts, forbidding ſuch a practice, of which, the concurring conſent of the wiſeſt Lawgivers, and Writers, of the wiſeſt and moſt civiliz'd People, of all Ages, is, I think, one very good proof. Diſ. XVII.

As to any Declaration of the Will of God, in this Particular, in the written Revelation; it is not to be expected there ſhould be a ſingle Prohibition of every ſingle Sin, that a Man can commit; 'tis ſufficient if there be general Prohibitions, that include them all. And ſuch is, in this caſe, that general one, of, *thou ſhalt do no Murther*; which ſecures the life of every Man and Woman in the World, whoſe life is not obnoxious, by ſome other Command, to be taken away: As, the Laws, for inſtance, puniſh *Theft*, and other Crimes with Death, notwithſtanding the *ſixth Commandment*, becauſe Men commit other Offences, to which Death

Diſ. XVII.

is due by other Laws, of equal force with the Law againſt Murther. But it is Murther ſtill, to take away any ones Life, and an Offence againſt the ſixth Commandment, if that life be not forfeited by ſome other Law, of equal force and obligation with this againſt Murther.

But theſe Commands do all reſpect our *Neighbour* only, and they who murther themſelves, know and confeſs they are tied by the ſixth Commandment, not to murther any one elſe. To this it may be anſwered, that this is down-right to beg the queſtion in hand, for if the Letter and the Senſe of the Command will reach a Mans ſelf, as well as his Neighbour, why ſhould not the Commandment include our ſelves? A Man is murthered, when he murthers himſelf, and the Command prohibits Murther: And though the Commandments of the *Second Table* do eſpecially refer to our Neighbour, yet not excluſively of our ſelves; we may not bear falſe witneſs againſt our ſelves, no more than againſt our Neighbour, becauſe the truth is hurt thereby, and ſome wrong done by ſuch a Teſtimony; ſo that where it is poſſible for the Commandments to take in our own caſe, there they will do ſo, as well as our Neighbours. But to make the matter plain,

plain, let it be taken for ſuppoſed, that both the ſixth, and the reſt of the Commandments of the Second Table, reſpect our Neighbour only; and we may ask, whether by *Neighbour*, is not to be underſtood, any one that is truly injur'd by our Offence, as well as the Party moſt immediately concern'd? the Seventh Commandment for Example, is, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.* When a wicked Man falls into this Commiſſion, and abuſes his Neighbours Bed, does he only offend againſt the Partner of his Sin, the Adulterous Woman, or alſo againſt, the injur'd Husband? Does he not alſo offend againſt his own Wife, if he have one? Does he not offend againſt the Parents and Relations alſo of his wicked Accomplice, diſhonouring their Name, and Houſe, and filling the Family with Grief, and Shame, and much Confuſion? When a Man *ſteals*, againſt *the Eighth Commandment*, does he only offend againſt the Party whom he immediately wrongs, or alſo againſt thoſe, who ſuffer by that wrong? when one bears falſe teſtimony, againſt the *Ninth Commandment*, and thereby defeats a Mans title to his Eſtate, his Office, or Employ, does he not offend againſt the Wife, and Children of that Man who liv'd by that Eſtate, or Office, or Employ, as well as againſt

Diſc. XVII.

Diſ. XVII. againſt the Man and Maſter of that Family? You ſee then that the Commandment reſpects more than *one* Party, under the notion of *Neighbour*, even *all* that are injur'd by that Tranſgreſſion. Now I ask, whether this does not happen alſo, in breaking the ſixth Commandment, by murthering ones Neighbour? Are not the Wife and Children, and the Family, made very miſerable by ſuch a Death? And I ask again, whether the ſame miſchief does not follow to ones *own* Family, by a Self-murther, as to another Family, by the murther of another? And if it do, 'tis certain that the ſixth Commandment forbids Self-murther, as ſure as it does the murther of another, becauſe it forbids the *Conſequences* of Self-Murther (which are ſhame, and grief, and loſs, and pain, and injury, and all ſorts of miſchiefs) as certainly as it forbids the Conſequences of murthering any one beſides; becauſe a Man is no more at liberty to injure and afflict his own Houſe and Relations, than the Houſe and Relations of a Stranger. If therefore he offend againſt his *Neighbour*, even all that are injured by his offence, as well as the ſingle Party injur'd more immediately; 'tis manifeſt he alſo offends againſt his *Neighbour*, even all his own Houſe, Relations, and Dependants, by taking

king away his own life; ſince (as I ſaid) the Conſequences are the ſame, and full as calamitous, to my own Family, by ſuch a ſtroak, as they would be to another Family, if I ſhould by a Murther, deprive it, of a like Relation. If therefore, a Man, were at full liberty, as to any expreſs Command of God, to do that violence to himſelf, yet he would be obliged to with-hold his hand, by many other Commands of God, which forbid the doing ſo much miſchief to other People, as ſuch a Violence does always do. There is therefore nothing gain'd to this Cauſe, by alledging the Sixth Cemmandment, does not forbid Self-murther, as relating to our Neighbour only, *i.e.* to other People, becauſe 'tis manifeſt, our Neighbours, other People, are exceedingly miſchief'd by the breach of it, in Self-murther. The miſtake in all theſe caſes, ſeems to be this, at the bottom, the thinking the Commands of the *Second Table*, refer to *one* Neighbour only, namely, the Party concern'd immediately in the injury; whereas they do undoubtedly refer to *all* Neighbours that are, by a natural and eaſie Conſequence, concern'd and injur'd: As the Wife in the Husband, the Husband in the Wife, the Parents in the Children, and the Children in the Parents; and ſo in all Relations, more or leſs. And therefore if the Commands of God

Diſ. XVII.

Diſ. XVII. God, prohibiting Adultery, Theft, and Falſ-witneſs, are underſtood to prohibit not only the ſingle *Acts*, but alſo the miſchievous and wicked *Conſequences* of thoſe Acts, which are natural and unavoidable. 'Tis plain the *Sixth* Commandment does the like, and therefore forbids Self-murther, unleſs it can be ſeparated from all thoſe miſchievous and wicked Conſequences that unavoidably follow that practice.

And, that theſe *Conſequences* are equally intended by God the Law-giver, and are to be as much regarded by Men, as the prime miſchief and *occaſion* of them, may appear farther from hence, (as well as the guilt of Self-murther) that tho' a Man were never ſo weary of his life, and ſought as willingly for Death, as People in pain for Eaſe, and wearied Labourers for Reſt and Sleep; yet were it utterly unlawful to give that Man the ſatisfaction he deſir'd, by killing him; not only becauſe it would be murthering of that ſingle Man (notwithſtanding his deſire of dying) but becauſe of the miſchiefs following to the Family, by ſuch Death. *Firſt*, It would be murther to kill a Man, though he were very deſirous of dying, and requeſted it, as a kindneſs, at your hands; Murther therefore does not bare-

ly

ly conſiſt in Violence that is offered to one, *againſt his will*; but, in taking away a life which you have no right to take away, by the Laws of God or Man; but why have you no right to do that which he deſires of you, ſince wrong is done to no one who is willing, and he conveys his Right to you, by his deſiring you to kill him? The reaſon is, he has no Right himſelf, and therefore can convey none to another. If he were Maſter of his own life, ſo as to lay it down at pleaſure, by Gods Law, I do not ſee but he might make *you* maſter of it, if he pleas'd, and by full conſent. Whatever he can lawfully do to himſelf, he can, if he will, empower you, to do to him, and whatever he cannot empower you to do to him, he cannot do himſelf. Now he cannot empower you to kill him, and the reaſon is, he has not power (I mean by Gods Law) to kill himſelf; for, if he had power by Gods Law, to kill himſelf, he would not offend againſt Gods Law, by commiſſioning *you* to do ſo; taking it therefore for granted, that to kill a Man, though willing and deſirous to be kill'd, would yet be murther before God, it will follow, *Firſt*, That a Man has really no ſuch conſent to give, his life is not in his own power to throw away (for if it might be *given*,

Diſ. XVII.

Diſ. XVII. *en*, it might be *taken.*) *Secondly*, that miſchief may be done, to one that is willing and conſenting to it, and therefore that Self-murther is not the leſs miſchievous and injurious, becauſe a Man conſents to it. And *Thirdly*, That Murther (as well as other Crimes) has eſpecial reſpect to the injuries and miſchiefs that other People ſuffer, as well as to thoſe inflicted immediately on the Party concern'd. For if Murther be a Crime, becauſe it deprives a Man of what is ſo valuable as life (although not valued by this Man, who willingly parts with it) it is alſo a Crime becauſe it deprives *other* People, of the aſſiſtance, help, and comfort which that life either did, or might afford them. And that which another Mans life, is to *his* Relations, Kindred, and Dependants, that is *your* life, to *your* Relations, Kindred, and Dependants; and therefore no more to be caſt away by *you*, than *his* is to be taken away by any other Man.

I have repeated theſe things, that you might ſee the plainer, how a Mans life is not his own, to do as he pleaſes with it; but, that could he be ſuppoſed to be at liberty, with reſpect to his ſingle ſelf, to throw it away at pleaſure, yet that his Duty and Obligation to his *Relations* (not now to ſay the *Publick*) would conſtrain him

him not to do it; and this by the Law of God, even by the Sixth Commandment, which, forbidding the injuries and miſchiefs conſequential upon Murther, as well as the Murther it ſelf, muſt alſo be underſtood to include the miſchievous conſequences of Self-murther, as well as any elſe. And if the Conſequences are prohibited, the cauſe and occaſion of them alſo is prohibited. Diſ. XVII.

I alledge, in the next place, that both the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, few or none excepted, have all along condemn'd this practice, and thought it was condemn'd by the Sixth Commandment in general, as well as, by other paſſages in Scripture, by natural, and unſtrain'd Conſequence. Although, to do them right, they never fail'd to affirm, that to do violence to ones own life, was to act againſt Reaſon and Natural Religion, withdrawing our Obedience from our Supream Commander, withſtanding his Will, diſtruſting his Care and Providence, and betraying an impotent and effeminate Mind, ſhrinking from beneath the common accidents of life, and able to bear nothing uneaſie; together with thoſe other Arguments which are every where to be met withal, and which therefore I meddle not with at preſent; being content you ſhould only obſerve,

Diſ. XVII. obſerve, that this Practice hath been all along condemn'd, by People of all Religions, and perſued with great abhorrence; and all manner of diſcouragements, and by the Chriſtian Religion eſpecially with dreadful Sentences: And therefore, let every one conſider ſeriouſly, what Obligations, the conſent that is ſo general, and ſo reaſonable, muſt lay upon them. To think it is not forbidden by God to deſtroy the work of his Hands, becauſe Self-murther is not named expreſly, is to leave your ſelf at liberty to commit a hundred other hateful Crimes, that are not ſpecified in particular, but are concluded under general Heads. When God ſays to *Noah* in *Gen.* 9. 6. *Whoſo ſheddeth Mans Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed, for in the Image of God made he Man.* 'Tis plain, that whatever the meaning of the laſt words are, in whatever ſenſe Man is ſaid to be *made in the Image of God*; the reaſon of the Prohibition holds as ſtrong and good, againſt *Self-murther*, as againſt the killing any other Man. For, if I muſt not ſhed the blood of *another* Man, becauſe he is *made in the Image of God*, I muſt not ſhed the blood of my *own ſelf*, becauſe I alſo am a Man, and made alike alſo *in the Image of God*, as he is. That Reaſon I ſay (whatever it is) reſtrains *Self-*

murther;

murther, juſt as much as it does the mur- Diſ.
ther of any other Man. But I will alſo XVII.
add, (and which I would you ſhould re-
member) a reaſon, why Self-murther is
not, any where, *expreſly* prohibited by its
Name, and that is, that whatever Sins
and Offences God, as a Lawgiver, prohi-
bits, he prohibits with a Penalty; he af-
fixes ſuch a Puniſhment to ſuch a Crime,
and he who commits that Crime, is to un-
dergoe the determin'd Puniſhment in this
World, whether it be Reſtitution, loſs of
Limb, or of Life it ſelf. Now this can ne-
ver happen in the caſe of Self-murther,
which prevents all Puniſhment, and there-
fore prevents all *Threatning*, and all Laws.
When I ſay that God prohibits no Offence,
without affixing a Puniſhment to its Tranſ-
greſſion, I do not mean that he always did
it *himſelf*, but that it was always done by
his Appointment, Order, and Decree, tho'
for the moſt part, the Puniſhment is nam'd
by him himſelf. But neither God, nor
Magiſtrate, can prohibit Self-murther with
any Penalty, that can affect the Criminal
himſelf; becauſe, by his very Crime, he
eſcapes all temporal puniſhment in Perſon;
he is dead, before you can take any cog-
nizance of his Offence. You ſee, then,
what reaſon there is, why Self-murther
was not expreſly prohibited by Name,

Diſ. XVII. by God, or *Moſes*, by command of God. No Law can be enacted, to any purpoſe, without a Penalty, where therefore there can be no Penalty, there can be no Law; now Self-murther prevents all Penalty, and therefore, wants no particular Prohibition; it muſt therefore, be included under general Commands, and forbidden only as a *Sin*, of which God only can take cognizance, and that in another World. This ſatisfaction was owing to that common Objection, that Self-murther was no where expreſly forbidden by God, by Name, though abundance of matters, of much leſs moment, were, in the Holy Scriptures. But I muſt ſay, upon this occaſion, that *Scripture-Silence* is true Silence, and ſays nothing, either *for*, or *againſt* any practice; and that when in this Relation of *Achithophel*, as alſo of that of *Judas*'s ſad end, there is neither blame, nor commendation beſtowed on what was done, by either; we muſt judge by ſome other Rule, whether they did well, or amiſs, and not by the Relation, which neither blames by not commending, nor commends by not blaming, what is related. It is moſt certain, that Self-murther is forbidden by God, in general, and by conſequence, in many places of the Holy Scriptures: And is really utterly irreconcile-

reconcileable, with that patience under afflictions, that Reſignation and Submiſſion to the will of God, in all conditions of life, however ſad and calamitous, that the Chriſtian Religion certainly requires of its Profeſſors. And, to think it is no Sin to deſtroy ones ſelf, is one of the fatalleſt miſtakes a Man can fall into, and fruitful of all ill conſequences, and utterly condemns all the Wiſdom, and all the Religion that ever was eſteemed in the World. But I will, at preſent, only inſiſt on your conſidering what has been ſaid, concerning the miſchief and the injury done, by theſe ſuddain ſtroaks, to our Neighbour, *i. e.* to other People. There is ſometimes a great loſs to the Publick, by throwing away a valuable and uſeful Life: Always, ſcandal and offence taken by good, but weak People; and ſome are miſled by ſuch Examples. But who can expreſs the Pain and Grief, the Shame and the Confuſion, of all the innocent Relations that Survive? Even natural and eaſie Deaths, create a world of ſorrows, and make a deal of humane life (ſhort as it is) tedious and full of trouble: Sudden and accidental Deaths affect us yet deeper, and if they have any thing remarkably calamitous and ſad in them, it is worſe ſtill. But when 'tis violent, and deliberate, then

Diſ. XVI.

Diſ. XVII

are they perfectly oppreſs'd and overwhelm'd. Is this the care, Men are to take of thoſe who love them beſt, and who are, often, beſt belov'd by them? Does this look any thing, like Piety to Parents, or kindneſs to Wife and Children? Yet this is the return that theſe unnatural Children make to Fathers and to Mothers, if alive; this is the Dowry that theſe Husbands leave their Wives; and this the Patrimony Fathers convey to their Deſcendants. 'Tis true, indeed, theſe miſerable People *intend* not theſe misfortunes and afflictions to their Friends and Kindred; they have it not in their Hearts, to entail ſuch miſery upon thoſe to whom they wiſh all happineſs; but ſo it is, they ſee, in other Peoples caſes, and ſo, they know, it muſt be, in their own: And 'tis no matter what they *purpoſe*, when what they *do*, will have its natural operation, and occaſion all theſe miſchiefs. I think if any conſideration that is purely Humane, could reſtrain theſe cruel Violences, it ſhould, and would be this, of ſaving ſo much pain, and ſorrow, and confuſion, as they unavoidably occaſion to the beſt and neareſt Friends they have in the World, by parting, in ſuch manner, from them. Is it ſo hard for *you* to bear, a little Poverty, a little Shame, Reproach, or Infamy, or e-

ven

ven the fear and apprehenſion of theſe things? So hard, that you will rather die than venture them, or than endure them? And yet you will entail them on your Kindred and your Family, who have done nothing to deſerve them; you will leave them to the reproaches and revilings, and the ill uſage, of a pittileſs, inſulting, and uncharitable World, who will be ſure to load them with the infamy and the diſhonors that you leave them. But, above all, with what perplexing doubts and fears, with what amazing and diſtracting thoughts, do you fill their minds, concerning your condition in the other World? That concern indeed, touches even Strangers, all that hear of ſuch ſad Accidents; but that's an eaſie tranſient trouble, in compariſon with that, which Kindred and Relations feel, on ſuch occaſions, whoſe grief is equal to their love, and laſting as is their life. Diſ. XVII.

Some times it happens, that the conſideration of doing miſchief, or diſhonour, to thoſe they love, and to whom they owe all Duty, will reſtrain People from doing, what they incline ſtrongly to do, and from doing which the conſideration of their own Honour, Intereſt, and Duty, will not reſtrain them. And therefore it were well, if theſe unhappy People, when they forget God, and themſelves, would yet per-

Diſ. XVII.

mit the ſenſe of the Duty they owe their Neighbour, even their beſt Friends, and neareſt Relations, to dwell upon their minds, and have its work upon them; that they would be content to live, at leaſt till they can die without doing wrong or miſchief to *other People.* This is what the Conſideration of *Ahithophels* end led me to ſay, in oppoſition to a practice that prevails too much among us, of Peoples deſtroying themſelves, as *he* did. When the Jayler (who had received ſo ſtrict a charge of ſecuring *Paul*, and *Silas*, and knew that he muſt anſwer body for body, for his Priſoners) *found the Priſon Doors open, he drew out his Sword, and would have kill'd himſelf, if* Paul *had not cried out with a loud Voice, do thy ſelf no harm, for we are all here,* Act. 16. 27. But this Jayler, was a poor *Gentile*, an ignorant and unlearned *Roman*, in all likelyhood; and therefore it is no great wonder, to ſee him forward to diſpatch himſelf in ſuch a manner; who only had it in his mind to avoid, perhaps, a lingring and tormenting Death, for letting his Priſoners ſcape, by one more quick and eaſie, by his own Hand; and knew, it may be, nothing of any other life than what he was leaving; by ſuch People one can hardly expect the Laws of Nature, or the Dictates of Reaſon, or the Opini-

Opinions of wiſe Writers ſhould be conſi- Diſ.
dered; they live by Senſe, and are go- XVII.
vern'd by their Paſſions. But better things might be expected of *Ahithophel*, a *Jew*, a Man of better Education, a Man of Birth, the Kings Counſellor, and accounted ſo wiſe, that whoever advis'd with *Ahithophel*, it was, in thoſe days, *as if he had enquired at the Oracle of God*; and therefore ſo much feared by *David*, when he heard he was with *Abſalom*, that he prayed expreſly to God, that he would *defeat the Counſel of Ahithophel*, before he knew what it was, as knowing it would be ſhrewdly miſchievous, if followed. That one thus qualified, ſhould dare to die in ſuch a manner, is ſtill more ſtrange and unaccountable; yet even *Ahithophel's* Self-murther was not near ſo wicked and audacious, as ſuch an attempt muſt needs be in an underſtanding educated *Chriſtian*; to whom the Will and Commands of God are reveal'd with equal certainty, but with much greater, (at the laſt much plainer) Arguments and Motives, both to deter from all offence, and to encourage to obedience. A Chriſtian, that believes in God, the immortality of the Soul, and the life of the World to come, ſo much, that he could not be a Chriſtian without ſuch belief; nor indeed a wiſe Man in being a

Ch. XVII. Chriſtian; one that believes that the wrath of God is now reveal'd againſt all Unrighteouſneſs; that without Repentance no Mans Sins can be forgiven; that after Death there is no Repentance, but that as the Tree falls, ſo it will lie; that ſuch a Man as this, profeſſing the faith of Chriſt crucified, and covenanting with God, in Baptiſm, to take up the Croſs, and bear it, if need be, to Death, ſhould, in the impatience of his Soul, and preſs'd by ſome Calamity, a little more than ordinary, deliberately chooſe to throw this burthen off, by committing what he knows a Sin, of which he knows he never can *repent*, and venture the moſt dreadful conſequence of that, to everlaſting Ages, is, what no body could ever reaſon themſelves into the belief of, if the frequent practice of ſome moſt unhappy People, did not convince us, it *might be* done, by letting us ſee it *was*: But 'tis in truth, a great Reproach to Reaſon and Chriſts Religion, that ſo it is; and not a little diſhonour is alſo caſt upon our *Nation* hereby, as furniſhing more Examples of this ſort of Violence, than any other, though much larger: Though that Reproach may help a little to ſave the honour of Religion, as caſting this bad practice, ſomewhat, on our Climate, Diet, Liberty, Complexion,

on, and way of living. But I would make no manner of excuſe for it; 'tis a Practice to be abhorr'd and condemn'd with all our zeal, to be perſued with all pity; and to be guarded againſt, with all our Care and Prudence, all our Reaſon and Religion, our walking in the ways of God with all ſtedfaſtneſs, and pouring out our conſtant Prayers for his preventing and aſſiſting Grace, that his fear may ever be before us, and that no Temptations to ſuch Impiety may ever prevail upon us. Of the reſt of the Particulars contain'd in the Text, in the manner already laid out, you will read in the Diſcourſes following.

Dif. XVII.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe XVIII.

II. Samuel xvii. Verſe 23.

And when Ahithophel *ſaw that his Counſel was not followed, he ſadled his Aſs, and aroſe, and gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order, and hanged himſelf, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

HAving, already, taken occaſion from theſe words, to conſider the caſe of Self-murther, and ſhewn that *Ahithophel* had no right to diſpoſe of his own life, in the manner he did; nor any Man elſe to offer violence to himſelf; but that all Men were reſtrain'd from ſuch attempts, by the general Law of God, contain'd in the Sixth Commandment forbidding Murther; which being grounded on the Reaſon given by God in Gen. 9. 6. *that Man was made in the Image of God*, did as certainly take in *Self-murther*, as the Murther of any *other* Man, every Man being himſelf made in the Image of God, as much

much as his Brother; and ſhewn more- Diſ.
over, that the Conſequences of Murther, XVIII.
Adultery, Theft, and Falſe-witneſs, being as certainly forbidden by God, as the prime Acts themſelves, it would unavoidably follow, that the Conſequences of Self-murther were as certainly forbidden, as the Conſequences of any other Murther; and therefore that the Sixth Commandment, though eſpecially relating to the Duty we owe our Neighbour (*i. e.* to one another) did as certainly prohibit Self-murther, by prohibiting its Conſequences, as any other Command prohibited the Prime Act, by prohibiting the miſchievous effects that follow from it unavoidably, and anſwered, as the time would let me, the common Objections that are raiſed, in juſtification of theſe ſorts of Violence. I am now, without farther repetition, to proceed to *the Second thing*, I was to ſpeak to, namely the *Occaſion* of *Ahithophels* Self-murther, which was, *that he ſaw that his Counſel was not followed.* The Hiſtory of that matter, is, in ſhort, this, *Abſalom* by his popular Demeanour, and artful Menagement, had eſtrang'd the hearts of the *Jews* from the Love and Obedience they owed to *David* his Father; and there was ſo great a Defection, that it is, really, unaccountable, from what appears in the Hiſtory: In this,

Diſ. XVIII. this, *Ahithophel* was deeply concern'd, and was accounted the very life and ſtrength of the Conſpiracy: And being call'd to give his Advice what *Abſalom* had to do, he took care, in the firſt place, to make the breach irreconcileable betwixt the Father and the Son; in this thing *Abſalom* followed his directions cloſely, as you may ſee, in 2 *Sam.* 16. 20. but adviſing farther, *Chap.* 17. to purſue *David* cloſely, with a body of Men that might certainly ſurprize him, he was, in this point, oppos'd by *Huſhai* the *Archite*, another very able Counſellor, and ſent by *David*, on purpoſe, to go over to *Abſaloms* Party, to defeat the Counſel of *Ahithophel*; and he did it effectually; for his Counſel was the more plauſible (though not ſo good for the young Prince) and was accordingly followed, both *Abſalom* and all the Men of *Iſrael*, ſaying, *The Counſel of* Huſhai *the* Archite, *is better than the Counſel of* Ahithophel. I leave you to read, your ſelves, the different Counſels of theſe two Stateſmen; 'tis only to my purpoſe to obſerve, that the diſtaſt *Ahitophel* took at his Advices being rejected, was the occaſion of his Ruine, *When he ſaw his Counſel was not followed, he aroſe, and went home to his Houſe, ſet his Houſhold in order, and hang'd himſelf, and died.* There were two things eſpe-

eſpecially, that gave him this Diſcontent, the *Firſt*, ſo ſee his Counſel not followed, but that of another Man preferr'd before his, a diſgrace that a great Stateſman knows not how to bear, or put up; his Counſel was (you will find in his Hiſtory) had in ſo great account, that, to adviſe with *Ahithophel*, was, in thoſe days, *as if one had enquired of the Oracles of God*; and this eſteem, makes a diſgrace ſit ſo much heavier on the mind. But *Secondly*, he ſaw the Conſequences of his Counſel being rejected, he ſaw his new Choice, and the Party he had turn'd to, would be ruin'd, by the advice of *Huſhai* the *Archite*: He knew that *Abſalom* would not be able to hold it long againſt his Father; he had loſt his Opportunity, and given to *David*, Time and Breath, which was the only thing he wanted, and leiſure to the People of *Iſrael* to conſider their Revolt, and to repent, and timely to make their peace with their old King, by returning to their Duty and Obedience: This was the fatal miſcarriage of *Abſaloms* Affairs, that *Ahithophel* ſaw clearly, and ſaw it was not to be retriev'd, and ſaw, perhaps, the treachery of *Huſhai*, and his deſign in giving ſuch advice. And he knew very well where *Davids* wrath would light, with all his Vengeance, when he ſhould be reſet-

Diſ. XVIII.

led

Diſ. XVII. led on his Throne again, namely, upon the *Evil Counſellors*, of which he was himſelf the chief. He ſaw the heart of a good old indulgent Father, would (if he ſcap'd with life in fight) quickly paſs by, and ſpare the raſhneſs of a young and giddy Prince, his beloved Son, and diſcharge his fury on the wicked Inſtruments that had ſeduced him to Rebellion: And you may ſee by the tenderneſs and care that *David* took of *Abſalom*, in his charge to *Joab*, before the Battle, and the grief he felt, upon his loſs, you may ſee by this, how rightly and truly *Ahithophel* judg'd of matters, and how well he knew where the Storm at laſt would fall, even chiefly on himſelf, who had given ſuch miſchievous counſel, that had it been purſued, *David* had certainly been loſt. For this, he knew, he muſt pay down his life, when *David* ſhould return with Victory; there wrs no pardon for one ſo able, and deep engag'd in the Conſpiracy, as he: And therefore he reſolves to prevent the ſtroak of *David*, by one of his *own*. So that here is the ſenſe of a diſgrace paſt, in having his Counſel rejected, and the fear of farther ſhame and pain to come (the conſequence (he ſaw) of his Counſel's not being followed) that occaſion'd him to fall into this deſperate Reſolution, of laying violent hands upon himſelf. When

When Men engage in any wicked Practice, as *Ahithophel* here did, and find themſelves diſappointed, and their great purpoſes defeated, and they are brought to ſhame, or into danger, their minds are not equal to their burthen, their Stomach is ſo high, their Pride ſo great, that they know not what to do with that ſingle Imagination, of *what the World will think or ſay of them.* All Men, they fancy, are obſervers of their Actions, and have their eyes upon them; and when they have miſcarried, all Men cenſure, and reproach them, and condemn them. So that tho' they can bear the *guilt*, themſelves, yet they cannot bear the *ſhame* it occaſions them with *others*; this oppreſſes and confounds them. I think one may obſerve, that in, almoſt, all theſe deadly Reſolutions that People take againſt themſelves, there is ſomething *worldly* at the bottom, that meets with ſome naughty Paſſion or other, that prevails againſt their Reaſon, and ſets them on this bad Work. And what can one infer better, from this Example, than that every one ſhould be extremely careful, how they engage themſelves in matters of great difficulty, or danger, leaſt the diſappointment be too great for them; and that, not only in matters certainly wicked and forbidden, but even in Diſ. XVIII.

Diſ. XVIII. in all others, where the Event, if not ſucceſsful, is like to be of great, but ill conſequence, to them; for few People underſtand themſelves throughly, or know the ſtrength or weakneſs of their minds, in great trials; and therefore ſhould not eaſily put themſelves upon them.

But ſince the accidents of life, that are neither to be foreſeen, nor prevented, trouble us as much as the miſcarriages of our own deſigns, deliberately laid, the next uſeful caution may be, to have our Minds ſo prepar'd, and our Affections ſo ſubdued, and kept in ſo good order, that the common calamities of life, though they may ſurprize, yet may not quite confound us: That we may not be ſo loſt and deſtitute of ſuccour from our Reaſon, as to give our ſelves up, to the guidance of our preſent Paſſion, and follow where that leads: For this, indeed is the common lot of thoſe who fall into the deſperate Reſolutions, we are ſpeaking of: Their Paſſions are always high, never controul'd or check'd, evermore indulg'd and yielded to; ſo that when grievous accidents befal them, they know not where-abouts they are, nor whither to turn themſelves; they can bear no loſs or diſappointment, nor fall from the Condition, in which they formerly were, but abandon themſelves

selves entirely to Sorrow, and Despair. Dis.
The bottom of this mischief is, that they XVIII.
place their whole Happiness in the attainments of this World, in the possessing Riches, the enjoying Honours, and in the praise and approbation of Men: And therefore when the first make to themselves wings and fly away, the hearts of these People fail with them; when they fall from their Honours, and lose their Dignities, they know not how to breath in any other Air, nor how to want the Courtship and Respects that were wont to be paid their *Power* and *Interest*, not their *Persons*. When they lose their Credit and Esteem, and sink in their Reputation, whether deservedly or no, they are dejected to the lowest ebb, they are afraid that every Eye that looks upon them, views them with Contempt, and that every Tongue is evermore reproaching them, which makes them asham'd of light, and weary of living.

Riches indeed, are of great use to the making life easie; but the happiness of Mans life does not depend upon abundance of Wealth; some are happy in a little, and all may be happier in less than they imagine; but, not to Philosophise too much upon this Head, get what you can, with Innocence and Honesty, with Vir-

Diſ. XVIII. tue and the fear of God; and keep what you can, with juſtice to your Neighbour, and charity to the Poor. That Poverty which I have now in my Eye, and which is ſometimes the dreadful occaſion of the miſchievous deſigns I am ſpeaking againſt, that Poverty is not, uſually, the want of Riches, which we never could obtain, but which we once were Maſters of, and have loſt, either by accident, or viciouſly miſſpent. 'Tis the remembrance of our former affluence, that makes our preſent want ſo hard and inſupportable, even when we are undone by unforeſeen Calamities, and had no faulty hand in bringing our ſelves into theſe ſtraights. Yet ſuch a Poverty as this, though attended with all Mens Pity, and no Reproach or Blame, is ſometimes ſo laid to Heart, that the Man will not endure to live under it; than which there can be no reſolution more weak and unreaſonable, though it were not ſinful. Can one think the life of Man, ſhould lie ſo much at the mercy of every Accident, that may deprive one of ones temporal Eſtate? The miſery ſhould ſeem much greater, where our own Vice has brought this Poverty upon us, and our Ill-husbandry reduced us to Extremity; for there we reflect upon our own folly, and find it was we our ſelves that did our ſelves this miſ-

miſchief, and as we bear the *ſmart*, ſo we bear the *blame*, alone; when the Providence of God afflicts us, we ſubmit to that; when the Malice of Man afflicts us, we lay the fault there, and think of doing our ſelves right, too often, by ſevere Revenges. And when we afflict our ſelves, we can no more help condemning our ſelves, than others; and ſometimes take, we ſee, as ſevere revenges on our ſelves, as we would on others. We muſt therefore take as much care not to bring our ſelves to theſe extremities, by our ill menagement, and vicious courſes, as we muſt, not to provoke others to do us as great miſchiefs; becauſe the ſuffering is generally the ſame, and the Conſequence, ſometimes, much worſe, and the end is Self-deſtruction. The Reproaches, Mens own Hearts make them, when they have ruin'd themſelves and their Families, by folly, and wicked courſes, are often ſo ſharp and painful, that, with all the ſpirit and courage they can get, they cannot bear up under them: And this is an effect ſo ſure and conſtant, that when it does not end in ſuch deadly violences, yet it ends in all manner of ſottiſh, looſe, and wicked courſes; and therefore Care, Sobriety, and frugal Courſes, are the beſt, if not the only, Preſervatives, againſt that Dif. XVIII.

Diſ. XVIII

furious outrage, or that violent grief, that the ſenſe of ſuch a faulty Poverty throws Men oft into. A little Wiſdom, moderate Reſolutions, and ſtrength of Mind, will keep a Man right at firſt, and hold him in the ways of Goodneſs and Virtue; when a great deal of every one, will be neceſſary to recall him, when he once has wandered. You do not know what a change of mind, a change of fortune, ſo much to the worſe, will work in you, nor how you will be able to ſtruggle with ſuch Difficulties. Take care therefore, in time, to avoid the dangerous Experiment; the Reflections on your wicked Extravagances will not make ſuch impreſſions, it may be, on your mind, whilſt you are able to feed, and continue them on, as they will, when all is gone, and you have nothing to divert you, but are left to be conſum'd and eaten up (as it were) by them.

One is almoſt aſham'd, to warn People of falling into Poverty occaſion'd by their Vice, for fear of Self-murther; but that ſuch Poverty, is, now and then, the occaſion of ſuch violence; and the fear of Want, the Parent of ſuch deſperate Reſolutions. 'Tis eaſie to ſee, what muſt be ſaid on theſe occaſions, when People have brought themſelves to a morſel of Bread; namely, that 'tis an ill way of repairing their

their paſt folly and wickedneſs, by one to come, that will exceed them all, as much as Heaven is higher than the Earth: That the miſery they endure, will end in Death, at leaſt, and it may be it will come quickly; and that the Sins that brought them to that miſery, will be forgiven upon Repentance, be they never ſo great and many; whereas the courſe they pitch upon to relieve themſelves, is a Sin that admits of no Repentance, and conſigns them to Pains and Sorrows, that will have no End. Theſe are Arguments that cannot poſſibly be anſwered; but for fear they ſhould come too late, when Men are deaf to Reaſon, and the mind is obſtinately bent upon its wicked purpoſe (as deep woes do ſtrangely fix the Reſolution) it were much better that they ſhould prevent their coming into ſuch neceſſities, as lay them open to theſe temptations, by living in Sobriety, Temperance, and ſuch good-huſbandry, as well befits their Eſtate, and Condition. Diſ. XVIII.

Pre-eminence, moreover, Dignities, and Offices of Honours are not only uſeful, but abſolutely neceſſary to the good government of the World, and without them, there would be no Peace, no Order, no Society, or civil Commerce, among Men; and, therefore, they are, all of them, the

Diſ. XVIII. matter of a very lawful, laudable Ambition; and he who deſireth an Office and Employ of Honour, provided he intend to diſcharge it well, and to do the good, that Office requires, does nothing but what he may honeſtly do, although he alſo have his eye upon the recompence that goes along with it, and, without it, would not undertake it. But then, Men ſhew the weakneſs of their minds, when they have tied themſelves ſo cloſe and faſt to theſe Employs and Honours, that when they come to part with them, it is as if their very hearts were rent aſunder, and they are full of deep Reſentment, or a Sadneſs that is never to be remov'd, and oft precipitates their Death, and ſometimes too by violence. And though it does not *often* happen, that Men who fall from their Honours and great Employs, do theſe cruel violences to themſelves, yet it *ſometimes* does; and I am ſpeaking now to a Practice, that, God be thanked, never can be common, but yet which happens much too often, even as often as it happens.

And to make this Head more uſeful, 'tis certain that People of leſſer Fortune and Figure, are as much tranſported with Rage and Reſentment, and take as miſchievous Reſolutions, at their little diſappointments and low falls, in their low Sta-

tions,

tions, as the greateſt do at theirs, that make more noiſe, by falling higher. And therefore have equal need of taking care, that the love of Superiority, and Preference, and Diſtinction, take not ſuch faſt rooting in their minds; but that if the time of yielding come, they may do it without Impatience, Rage, and deep Reſentment. Dif. XVIII.

Credit, Eſteem, and Reputation, are alſo, *in the laſt place*, ſo uſeful to the well-being of Men, that all imaginable care is to be taken, to gain them, and ſecure them. There is not that Man in the World, but would be in the good opinion of all he knows, and all that know him; nothing is eaſier to the mind, nothing more uſeful to him, in all his Affairs, than that all Men ſhould think well of him. Even the Conſcience of our Innocence, and the full certainty we have, that we have not deſerv'd an ill Reputation, with this, or that Man, cannot ſo fortifie our minds, but ſome concern will ariſe in us, when we think thereon; and we had rather much ſtand right in their Opinion, though we have nothing to fear from them, nor any thing to hope for, at their Hands. We are made ſo, to depend upon one another, on purpoſe that we may do each other all good Offices; and the bottom and

Diſ. XVIII. ſpring of all good Deeds, being the good Opinion of their Deſerts, to whom they are done, 'tis neceſſary we ſhould think well of other People; and as neceſſary to be well thought of by them, in order to receive their favour. Upon theſe accounts it is, that we ſee all Men ſo extreamly careful to preſerve and defend their Reputation and good Name: And therefore 'tis no wonder, if the loſs, or danger, of it, affect Men very much, and ſenſibly affect them: A Man, without it, thinks he lives amongſt a band of Enemies, who are only reſtrain'd by fear, from doing him all manner of miſchief; or, if not this, yet that he is the ſubject of their daily Scorn, which is falling lower, than if he were the ſubject of their Anger or Revenge, becauſe he would be thereby reckon'd more conſiderable.

'Tis hard, that that which is ſo uſeful and delightful to every Man, ſhould be loſt ſo very eaſily; but ſo it muſt needs be, with a thing that is not in our own keeping, but in every bodies elſe, to give or take away, as intereſt or humour pleaſes. But, though this be true in the general, that our Reputation depends upon other People, yet (to do the World Juſtice) a Mans Reputation, with his Friends, and Acquaintance, and ſuch as know him pretty

pretty well, is very much in his own hands, and will depend, in the main, upon his Virtue, and Diſcretion; the *firſt* of which is his inward Guide, and directing Principle, the *latter* to govern his exteriour Carriage and Behaviour. And therefore an honeſt and prudent Man, will keep up his Reputation with thoſe who know him; his honeſty will make his Actions good and honeſt, and his Prudence will provide they ſhall be done, in the beſt manner. And when both inſide, and the appearance, are right, a Man will hardly be in danger of loſing his Reputation, with thoſe he values moſt, and would be beſt eſteemed by; although he may with ſuch as know him not, and take up every thing on truſt. But, indeed, the Infamy, Diſgrace, and Shame, that drive Men to thoſe wicked Practices (we are now eſpecially intending to divert Men from) are generally grounded, not on malice or miſtake, (though much of both is ſeen in all great Accuſations) but upon facts, that are truly infamous and wicked: Men have done ſomething that is either exceedingly unworthy of themſelves, or miſchievous to others, which excites both Amazement, and Abhorrence, in thoſe who hear of it, and raiſes ſo loud a cry againſt the Actors, that, ſtriking, firſt upon the Imagination ſtrongly, Diſ. XVIII.

Diſ. XVIII. ſtrongly, is never after out of their Ear; they think they hear of nothing but their Infamy, and that all mouths are full of their Reproaches, and that every look and geſture ſpeaks Contempt and Indignation at them: And fancying themſelves to be thus unacceptable to all abroad, and feeling themſelves guilty at home, there ariſes in their minds ſuch a mixture of Grief and Shame, Vexation, Fear, Remorſe, and other different Paſſions, that they are almoſt ſtrangled with the riſing of their own thoughts; and, to deliver themſelves from that inſupportable Oppreſſion, run headlong into Death, by the firſt way their poor diſordered fancy prompts them to. The only way therefore to avoid theſe dreadful miſchiefs, is, to continue in the ways of Reaſon and Virtue, to be guilty of no Extravagances, nor any ſuch Practices, as draw the hatred or contempt of the World after them. And it is eaſier far to preſerve our ſelves from theſe notorious Crimes, and Follies, than, when they are committed, to guard our minds againſt the wicked Suggeſtions they may offer. A Man in Innocence, has a mighty command over himſelf, above what he has when Guilt, and Shame, and Fear, have taken a full poſſeſſion of him, bewildred his Thoughts, diſſipated all his Recol-

Recollection, and enfeebled his Judgment. Diſc. XVIII.

I am ſtill for *preventing* miſchief, rather than *remedying* it, becauſe 'tis both more eaſie, and more ſafe. And although there is no Reaſon, but is ſtrong enough to diſparage and baffle all that can be ſaid in the behalf of theſe violent attempts againſt our ſelves, when we are ſafe, and well, and free from any ſuch fears, and in no danger of theſe Temptations; yet when Men come into thoſe perillous hours, and fall into thoſe Straits and Trials, they are generally deaf to all Reaſon and Argument, and liſten only to the Suggeſtions of their preſent Paſſions; they do not *anſwer*, but they do not *hearken*, to what is ſaid. So that if they be not prepar'd before-hand, to withſtand ſuch Aſſaults, they ſeldom do it, when the danger comes. *Ahithophel* could much more eaſily have avoided practiſing againſt his King, and entring a Confederate with rebellious *Abſalom*, than, being once entred, could avoid giving the moſt pernicious Counſel to make the breach between the Father and the Son irreconcileable, and, to to cut the War ſhort, by the ſurprize of *David*, to ſecure himſelf and Party: He could more eaſily have ſtayed at home, and been concern'd with neither Party, than,

Diſ. XVIII. than, being once engag'd, to bear anothers Counſel being preferr'd to his, and ſee himſelf neglected: He could more eaſily have followed *David*, and ſhar'd with him, in the worſt fortune that could befall him (even though it had been to die with him) than, having made him his Enemy, to think of falling into his hands, and dying the death of Traitours. Here were a great many things for him to chooſe, more ſafe and honourable than what he choſe; and it was much more eaſie for him to chooſe any of them, than, having choſen amiſs, and involv'd himſelf in great dangers, to bear up, like a Man, under them, and not to be overcome with ſhame and fear, and take ſuch deſperate Reſolutions, as he did. By all which, I mean to ſay, that Men have it much more in their power, to keep themſelves innocent, and out of difficulties and great ſtraits, than, being once guilty and involv'd, to deliver themſelves (not from their dangers, but) from the diſtracted Counſels, and Suggeſtions, their minds, in ſuch confuſion, offer them, although they be ſuch, as they themſelves, when ſafe and ſober minded, would have ſtartled at and abhorred. They think it a point of wiſdom, in their ſtraits, to embrace ſuch Counſel, as would have been accounted mad,

mad, and ſenſeleſs, in proſperity. One Argument, therefore, to perſwade Men to preſerve themſelves innocent and upright, and not to engage in things hazardous and difficult, for fear the diſappointment ſhould be too much for them, and their diſtracted mind ſhould put them upon miſchievous and wicked Reſolves, one ſuch Argument, I ſay, is better, and like to prevail more, than twenty very fair and reaſonable ones, when the Judgment is perverted, and the Underſtanding almoſt loſt, and the Man is overwhelm'd with miſery, neither inclin'd to *ask*, nor capable of *taking* Counſel, when 'tis offer'd him. Dif. XVIII.

And thus, in Caſes, where Religious Melancholy is the prevailing Humour, and drives poor People to theſe ſad Extremities; how much eaſier and ſafer is it, to ſecure them at firſt, from taking in ſuch Principles as occaſion theſe diſquiet and perplexing thoughts, than, having taken them in, to ſecure them againſt the power and influence of thoſe thoughts? Can any thing be more reaſonable to believe, than that God is the very beſt of Beings? That he tranſcends all other Beings, as much in Goodneſs, as in Power and Wiſdom? That that notion is formed as ſoon in our minds, and enters as much into the compoſition

Diſ. XVIII. poſition of the Deity, as any other? That a Being thus abſolutely, and thus neceſſarily good, can never intend any thing unmerciful or cruel; that it would be cruel and unmerciful for him, to make a Creature, with deſign of making it unſpeakably miſerable; that therefore this, neither *is*, nor *can be* done by him; that therefore no Man ever was deſign'd by God originally and primarily, to be miſerable in the World to come; but only made capable of being ſo, by ſinning voluntarily and deliberately, and upon that ſuppoſition, of being puniſh'd, and conſequently miſerable; but this will ſhew Man faulty, and God juſt, in puniſhing Offenders; that, whereas they think they ground this hard Opinion of God upon the revealed Will in Scripture; they might conſider, that if any ſuch thing appear'd *literally*, yet that *that* could hardly be the ſenſe of the place, which would deſtroy our natural notions of the Godhead (as this Pre-ordination to eternal miſery would deſtroy the natural notions we have of God's Juſtice and Goodneſs.) And next to that, might remember, that when Man fell into Sin, and muſt have periſh'd in it, God was ſo tranſcendently merciful as preſently to promiſe, and in his own due time effected, the ſending his only Son into

into the World, *that the World through him, might be ſaved:* That this his Son did actually come into the World, and live for our Example and Inſtruction, and die for our Redemption, and made ſatisfaction to God, for all the Sins of the World; and for the merit of theſe Sufferings, was advanc'd to Gods right hand in Heaven, and made the Head of the Church; who before his going up to Heaven, commiſſion'd his Apoſtles, to preach to all the World, and teach them, that if they repented of their Sins, would believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and be baptiz'd in matter and form, as he requir'd, and live in obedience to God's Word, they ſhould certainly be forgiven, and ſav'd. That theſe Invitations and Calls to Faith, to Repentance, and Baptiſm, and to Rewards upon Conditions, were all of them inconſiſtent *with*, and contradictory *to*, all manner of Predeſtination to wickedneſs and puniſhment. And that the whole deſign of the Goſpel is overturn'd by ſuch a Scheme of Cruelty, and horrible Injuſtice; and that ſuch Notions do utterly root out the love of God from all Mens Hearts, and repreſent him worſe, than one can do his Adverſary; in as much as revenge is ſomewhat better, than deliberate unprovok'd

Diſ. XVIII.

Diſ. XVIII.

vok'd and undeſerv'd Cruelty. 'Tis eaſier I ſay, to perſuade People, that God neither has, nor can predeſtinate any one to miſery; than, when they are once perſwaded of ſuch Doctrine, to divert them from the Conſequences of it, that naturally *may*, though they *do not* always follow, either careleſneſs under the ſecurity of their Predeſtination to Life, or Deſpair, under the certainty of being loſt for ever. I cannot tell how Men come to be perſwaded to believe ſuch hard things of God, who is Goodneſs it ſelf, as they never did, or could believe, of any Man living, though very bad, and their greateſt Enemy; but 'tis eaſie to ſee, that when they *do* believe theſe things, they are capable of no Advice or Comfort, if once they apply them to themſelves, and take the dark ſide.

Tell a Man, who labours under the ſenſe of much and frequently repeated Sin, and is ready to die under God's Diſpleaſure, and is ſeeking out forbidden means; tell him, that the Mercies of God in J. Chriſt, are infinite, and that though his Sins be never ſo heinous, both for weight and number, yet they will all be pardoned on Repentance and Amendment, and his Soul be purified by the precious Blood

Blood of Christ; and he may turn his Heart to God, repent him of his Sins, and fall from his cruel Resolutions, and become a new Man. But, bid him throw away that Instrument of Death, he has so carefully provided, when he believes he lies under the Sentence of Gods Wrath, and seal'd to Death by a Decree that is not to be revers'd; and you do but talk to the waves of the Sea, or the Winds that hear as little. I know no Argument that can wrest away the Sword, that such a perswasion puts into a Mans hand. And, that such hard Opinions have no worse nor frequenter ill Consequences, is owing all to the grace and goodness of God. They are fitted to do more mischief, but God is still the Governour of all, and loves us better than we do our selves, or think *he* does, and prevents us from doing our selves mischief, by our reasoning falsely against him, because he sees us ignorant, and not malicious.

Dis. XVIII.

The occasion *Ahithophel* took of destroying himself, led me to consider the occasions that other People take, to follow him, in that bad Practice. And we may see, I think, in every one of them, (and as many others, as any one can reckon up) that some unlawful Passion or o-

Diſ. XVIII.

ther is at the bottom, that meeting with ſome heavy Diſappointment, gives this naughty Counſel. Pride, that diſdains to be controll'd; Self-conceit, that will endure no Preference, ſcarce equality; the love of unlawful pleaſures, that effeminates the mind, and makes it unable to bear any Hardſhip or Calamity; ſuch love of Riches as makes Men fraudulent, or violent Oppreſſors, and puts them on ſhameful and unjuſt Courſes, which being detected, give them unſpeakable confuſion both of Face and Heart; ſuch ambition of Honours, as puts Men on unlawful courſes to obtain them, or preſerve them, and which they wear with Inſolence, and uſe to the hurt, and not the defence, of their Inferiors; ſo that they beget envy and malignity in Peoples minds, and make them wiſh for their fall, and rejoyce when it comes; the Senſe of which makes theſe haughty minds, when fallen, the moſt abject, pittiful, and poor ſpirited things that can be, well knowing, that they who have made no friends in the time of their Authority, will find none, when they come to looſe it, but be treated with the ſcorn, and ill-uſage, they govern'd others with: For no Man who hath gain'd his Honours honeſtly, and us'd them moderately, and well,

well, but will find reſpect and ſafety, when he lays them down; and ſhame, and infamy and danger, belong only to ſhameful, infamous, and injurious Practices: They who have done no evil, will be afraid of none. Do but live in the credit and eſteem, that virtuous honeſt Practices will give, and you will never fly to Death to deliver you from diſgrace and infamy, from Mens reproaches, and deſpightful uſage. Diſ. XVIII.

I do not, however, affirm, that in all Reſolutions of the bad kind we are ſpeaking to, ſome vicious Paſſion *is* at the bottom; but in general, it is, I believe, ſo; they may proceed alſo, from great weakneſs of Mind, falſe Principles, and from miſtakes in Religion, which tho' they are not Sins, yet produce moſt ſad effects, and are only to be prevented, by thinking as well of God, as they do of any good Man they know. Nor have I taken any pains, to ſhew, how little, any of theſe Cauſes or Occaſions, can juſtifie or excuſe the ſad effects of them, for, having ſhewed you, I hope, before, that this Practice was forbidden of God, and conſequently ſinful, I had no need to prove, that nothing can excuſe a downright Sin; but rather warn you, to

Dis. XVIII avoid those dangerous Paths that have, we think, led others to Destruction. For he who does not look to the Temptation and the Snare, shall, in vain, resolve against the sin and danger to which they lead.

Discourse

Diſcourſe XIX.

II. Samuel xvii. Verſe 23.

And when Ahithophel *ſaw that his Counſel was not followed, he ſadled his Aſs, and aroſe, and gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order, and hanged himſelf, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

HAving already (in conſidering theſe words) ſpoken, in the *firſt place*, to the diſaſtrous end *Ahithophel* came to, namely, that *he hang'd himſelf and died*, and ſhewed how unlawful an act that was in him, and would be ſo in any one beſides; and, in the *ſecond*, to the occaſion of it, namely, becauſe *he ſaw his Counſel was not followed*; and ſhewn from thence, that it is evermore ſome naughty paſſion at the bottom, meeting ſome diſappointment, that irritates the mind to ſuch unreaſonable and deſperate Reſolutions, of which we ought to take great care; I am now to go on, and conſider, *Thirdly*, that

Diſ. XIX.

which was previous to this fact. *He aroſe, gat him home to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order*; and *Laſtly*, what followed, *he was buried with his Fathers.*

In the *third place* then, *he aroſe, gat him home, to his Houſe, to his City, and put his Houſhold in order.* He could not long endure that Place and Company, where the Scene of his Diſgrace lay (as he thought) eſpecially: And yet, if he had reaſoned right, he had found, that the longer he had tarried there, the more he had been reſpected; the more deſtructive and unreaſonable his Rivals advice had appear'd; and every hour had diſcovered how wiſe and neceſſary *his own* was, at that juncture; and he had ſeen *Huſhai* either ſlighted as a weak Councellor, or ſuſpected as a treacherous one, and himſelf again, the Oracle. But to be *Second*, is, it ſeems, with Stateſmen, to be no body: his Rage and Ambition would not let him conſider, nor wait for an event that would juſtifie his wiſdom and foreſight to *Abſalom*, and all the haſty Councel of War. But this was not all; his wiſe Counſel was not only defeated, but that defeat, he ſaw, would prove the utter ruine of *Abſalom*, and all his Party: So that *Ahithophels* fear would no more permit him

to

to ſtay in the Camp, *ſecure*, than his ambition would let him ſit in the Council-Chamber *contented*. Upon theſe Principles, *he aroſe, gat him home, to his own Houſe, and ſet his Houſhold in order*. In which words, there is nothing obſerveable, but that, he acted very *deliberately*: had he been warn'd of God, that he ſhould ſhortly die, as King *Hezekiah* was, he could have done no more, nor otherwiſe than he here did; *he would have riſen, and haſted home, and have ſet his Houſe in order*. Dif. XIX.

Here is *one* Man, in the World, at leaſt, that ſeems to have deſtroyed himſelf, with Deliberation, and without any viſible marks of Diſtraction. This thing, we know, ſeldom or never happens, in our own Country; *here*, every one is down-right mad, that makes away himſelf, by any manner of means; he could not, elſe, act ſo againſt the principles of Self-preſervation, the Laws of Nature, Revelation, his own Intereſt, and Honour. Theſe are the Arguments, our *Pitty* rather than our *Reaſon* makes, upon theſe ſad occaſions; and pity rather to the *Living*, than the *Dead*. And ſhould the Laws of the Land, take no cognizance of theſe Violences, ſhould ſuch a Death have no Conſequence, with reſpect to the temporal Eſtate of the ſurviving

Diſ. XIX.

viving Relations; ten People I believe, to one now, would be found to be Self-murthers, and the publick Judgment, would (were there to be one made) be much the ſame, with that of private People.

Is it not manifeſt, in all caſes beſides this one, that People can and do deliberately do themſelves the greateſt miſchiefs, without any manner of ſuſpition of having loſt their Reaſon and Senſes, as thoſe words are, in this caſe, underſtood to ſignifie? Do not Men daily venture to provoke Gods Vengeance, by the moſt daring Impieties, with as much underſtanding and ſobriety, as they ſhew in any other faultleſs action of their Lives? Do they not venture liberty and life by a thouſand Vilanies, which they commit againſt each other, every day, by a malice moſt prepenſe and ſerious, and with moſt ſtudied Artifice, although they know, that, if diſcovered, they ſhall ſurely pay down their Heads, for what they do? Do not Men, by Riots and exceſs of every kind, hazard their Health and Life, almoſt every day they live, although they ſee the miſchief that will follow unavoidably, not at diſtance, but in view before them? Is Man ſo wiſe and ſo conſiderate a Creature, that he will not knowingly,

and

and reſolutely, defie the Juſtice of God, and Man, and all the effects of Vice and Wickedneſs, and moſt audaciouſly hazard Soul and Body, Health and Reputation, both in this World, and that to come? And do we ſay theſe People are *diſtracted*, and excuſe them, by loſs of Reaſon and Underſtanding? I am not ſaying, hereby, that Self-murtherers, are no more mad, than all theſe other deſperately wicked People are; but I ſay, that to conclude a Self-murtherer is therefore mad, becauſe he acts ſo like a Mad-man, againſt Nature, Reaſon, Religion, and Self-preſervation, is not a right way of concluding; becauſe, by the ſame Rule, all the enormouſly wicked ones of the World, might be judg'd mad, with as much reaſon as the others, ſince doubtleſly they act as much againſt all Principles of Reaſon, and Self-ſecurity, as they. And yet the World does not conclude theſe wicked People mad; they think it is not quite ſo well with them; their Reaſon, Senſe, and Underſtanding, make them accountable to God and Man, and will moſt certainly condemn them. Dif. XIX.

The People who truly want their Senſe and Underſtanding, do indeed often fall into miſchief, and often do great violence to themſelves, but generally ſpeaking, they ſeek not miſchief as their *End*, but fall into

Diſ. XIX.

to it accidentally, as blind Men do into a Pit; they do not make it their deſign, nor pitch upon the means that are moſt ſure, and proper to effect ſuch Purpoſe; one may commonly ſee ſome notable failure in their Projects; but in theſe ſorts of Violence, there is a fixt deſign, an end moſt ſtedfaſtly purſued; and means moſt ſuitable and proper pitch'd upon; and renewed with a moſt obſtinate Reſolution, and Firmneſs, again and again, upon a diſappointment; there is hardly any Action of their life, carried on with more contrivance, than that which is to put an end to it. And if the deſign were right, they would be counted rather *cunning* Men, than *Mad* or Senſeleſs; ſo that, 'tis plain theſe People make their judgment from the Event only, which is doubtleſs very wrong: for though the End be never ſo naught, unreaſonable, and wicked, yet a Man is not therefore mad, when he chooſes it, but naught, unreaſonable, and wicked. A Man indeed, is, in ſome ſenſe, mad, when he is under the dominion of any of his Paſſions, and out of the government of Reaſon; but, becauſe a Mans reaſon is given him by God, to govern himſelf withal, and to keep his Paſſions in good order, therefore Men do not excuſe the miſchievous effects of any of theſe Paſſions, by

ſaying

ſaying *the Man was mad.* And when one Man kills another, with equal Deliberation, with as much preparation, and contrivance, as ſome Men ſhew, in diſpatching themſelves; he is not commonly acquitted by making it Man-*ſlaughter*, but found guilty of *Murther.* And there can be no reaſon for this, but that in Self-murther no body elſe receives damage, for whom the Jury might be concern'd; which ſhews they rather conſider the miſchief that is done, than the ſtate and diſpoſition of mind, with which it is done. Dif. XIX.

Neither do I, by this, intend to ſay, that they who commit theſe Violences on themſelves, are not depriv'd of their Senſe and Reaſon; but that it is not *always* ſo; it were indeed to be wiſh'd much rather, that all Self-murtherers were truly diſtracted, than that any ſhould be ſo, with Reaſon and Senſe entire and ſound. But all the World ſees the contrary, theres many of them go about this buſineſs, as regularly, leiſurely, and deliberately, as *Ahithophel* here did, *they riſe, get them to their own home, and ſet their Houſhold in order*, juſt as he did; they reſolve on it a good while before, they perſue it ſteadily, they ſometimes juſtifie this Practice, and defend it by Principles, ſo that, upon ſome preſſing Calamity, one may expect ſuch an

Diſ. XIX.

an iſſue from them, before it actually comes to paſs. And yet, when it comes to paſs, 'tis all one, it is as if they had been ſuddainly ſeiz'd with frenzy, and they had been diſtracted but an hour before; the *Jury* and the *Coroners* ſee nothing but the ſad Event, and in Commiſeration to the ſurviving Relations, if any thing be to be ſav'd to them, declare them Diſtracted; and, *no Man, but a mad Man would deſtroy himſelf*, is all that is ſaid, to juſtifie ſuch a Sentence. Which is what is by no means true, and what they know the contrary to, in almoſt every ſingle caſe, but this. And in this they are, as I ſaid, only miſ-guided by their pity, they ſpare the Dead, to do ſome kindneſs to the Living; and ſince no body elſe but the Relations ſuffer by ſuch a Violence, they ſhall ſuffer no more than they needs muſt, by the natural Conſequences of ſuch a loſs.

Too much pity cannot, indeed, be ſhewn to thoſe who are made ſo miſerable by theſe violent Deaths: But who can tell, but that leſs pity would be needful, if leſs pity were ſhewn, on ſuch occaſions? The ſtricteſt Diſcipline in Camps, is attended with fewer Executions, than if it were more remiſs. And a ſevere exacting Juſtice, in execution of the Laws, prevents

vents abundance of Offences in the Civil State. And there are fewer Duels in *France*, than *England*; although the Country is, without compare, much larger, and the humours of that People much more volatile, and eaſie to be mov'd, than ours; and this, for a reaſon very obvious, and reproachful to us, *namely*, that few or none are ever Pardon'd, but Juſtice is *there*, as blind, and relentleſs, as the rage of Men that makes work for her, is *here*. Who can tell, but a ſeverer Sentence paſt upon Self-murtherers, would make fewer of them? And the utter ruine of ſome few Fatherleſs and Widows, prevent a great many more from being Fatherleſs and Widows? The Laws of almoſt all wiſe Nations, have had that in their Eye, in enacting Penalties; they have puniſh'd Wife and Children, and undone whole Families, for the offence of a ſingle Perſon, the Head of them, not, for want of knowing how innocent they were, but with intention of reſtraining thoſe Heads, within the bounds of Duty, for fear of hazarding and hurting thoſe who were ſo innocent, and whom they lov'd, and were oblig'd to love, and to ſecure from Want, and Shame, and Miſery, and make as happy as they could: Following herein, the Example of God himſelf *who will viſit*, he

Dic. XIX.

Diſ. XIX.

he ſays, *the Children to the third and fourth Generation, of them who hate him*, i. e. who keep not that Commandment of abhorring Idols, with no other purpoſe, than to keep the Fathers faithful to his Service.

It were therefore to be wiſh'd, that an experiment of this kind were now and then made, to ſee if it might not be more uſeful to the preventing theſe Misfortunes, than the merciful courſes that are now generally taken, to bring in all, *Diſtracted*, and ſo abſolve them all, from any legal Suffering, and puniſhing neither the Dead with Infamy, nor the Living with any loſs of Eſtate or Goods.

The Conſideration of diſgracing and undoing Wife, and Children, and Family, is intended we ſee, by the Laws, to reſtrain the Fathers of Houſes from offending, who would be more at liberty, if they themſelves were only concern'd, and were not to involve thoſe near Relations in Ruine; why ſhould not this, have its influence alſo, to prevent ſome Self-murthers, if the utter undoing of Wife and Children (as far as loſs of all Temporal Eſtate will do it) were ſure to follow ſuch a violence? The Laws intend it ſhould; and 'tis reaſonable to hope ſome good effects would follow, if ſuch Laws were duly

ly executed. And can any one tell, whether they who will always ſhew *Mercy*, when *Juſtice* is due, do not encourage thoſe Misfortunes, by their Pity, and make Men eaſier to deſtroy themſelves, becauſe they ſee, it will have no worſe Conſequence to their Relations, than if they died a Natural Death? Theſe things are ſurely of ſome Conſideration. And if ſome Examples were wiſely made, they might deter a great many raſh and wicked Enterprizes of this Nature. Diſ. XIX.

And ſo might alſo the Conſideration of what I am about to ſay, under the *fourth and laſt Head*, concerning what followed this wicked fact of *Ahithophel*; and that is, that *he was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father*. *Joſephus* ſays indeed, (*Dc. B. J. l.* 3. *c.* 14.) that if any amongſt the *Jews* kill themſelves, it is decreed, that till the Sun go down, they ſhall be unburied. This does not appear any where, in the Law of *Moſes*, and the example of *Ahithophel* in the Text, is againſt it, for he, we ſee, *was buried*, and, that, *in the Sepulchre of his Father*; ſo that this Decree was made in after-times, by Civil Authority, and it reached no farther, than not burying by *Day-light*; as if Self-murther were to be accounted a Deed of Darkneſs, and treated accordingly,

Among

Diſ. XIX.

Among the *Greeks*, *Ariſtotle* ſays, it was generally receiv'd, that the dead Bodies of Self-murtherers, ſhould be diſgraced ſome way or other, and they could find no other way to do it, than by denying them Burial. So when an unaccountable frenzy had ſeized the *Mileſian* Maids, and they hang'd themſelves in great numbers; the Magiſtrates knew not how to repreſs, and put a ſtop to this growing mad humour, but by ordering them to be carried out to burial *naked*, with the Cords about their Necks, which they had us'd to that bad Purpoſe; and the ſenſe of this diſhonour, had, by good fortune, the intended effect, for the reſt were ſo mov'd at the ſhameful Spectacle, that they fell into their old Sobriety and Order again, and made no more attempts of that kind: And yet, *Gellius* ſays from *Plutarch*, that theſe poor Creatures were under the power of a Diſtemper, but the fear of ſuch an infamous Burial, brought them to their Senſes again: And ſo we may obſerve, I think, that in moſt of theſe light Diſtractions, the reaſon is not ſo entirely loſt, but that the Parties are capable of ſome ſort of Arguments, and reſtrain'd by ſome particular Conſiderations, and Motives, of Love, or Fear, or Shame or Honour.

The Chriſtians alſo have thought fit, (to ſhew in what degree of Abhorrence they had this Practice) to deny them Chriſtian Burial, who have laid violent Hands upon themſelves; and (not to trouble my ſelf or you, with what hath been the practice heretofore of the Ancient Chriſtians, or is now of other Churches) it is directed ſo, in the firſt *Rubric*, before *our Burial-Service*, which is, you know, confirm'd by *Act of Parliament*, by which it becomes a Law of the Land, as well as of the Church. They are there rank'd with Perſons *unbaptiz'd*, and ſuch as die *Excommunicated*, by which we may conclude, ſhe reckons not Self-murtherers, among the number of the *Faithful*; nor accounts them to be true Chriſtians, and therefore cannot have that hope of them, as ſhe has of other Believers, who die in the Faith of Chriſt, and with Repentance, (for ought that appears) and therefore cannot ſay the ſame things of them, in her publick Prayers. Diſ. XIX.

And as the Church denies them Chriſtian Burial, ſo the Civil Government did heretofore appoint they ſhould be put into the Earth, and left there with a laſting mark of Infamy; *they were to have a Stake driven through them*, which was not to be remov'd.

Diſ. XIX.

But, notwithſtanding both theſe Penalties, intended both by Church and State, to deter all others from the like unnatural and wicked Attempts, by theſe diſgraces and diſhonours done to the Dead, they are now buried, as other good Chriſtians are; becauſe they are brought in *Diſtracted*; and if it be indeed ſo, there is no reaſon, why either the Civil Power ſhould mark them with any Infamy, or why the Church ſhould not have good hope of them, who, though unfortunate, are yet as much in Gods favour, as thoſe who are viſited with any other diſtemper, and happen to die, (as many do) without their Reaſon, and Senſes. No body can, with any reaſon, conclude ought to the prejudice of People that are truly Diſtracted; for they are not Maſters of themſelves, nor conſequently accountable for what they do, or omit to do; for *Revelation* being the Rule by which they are to walk, with reſpect to God, and Reaſon being the Faculty or Power, by which they are to *apply* that Rule, their Rule muſt needs be unapplied, by their defect of Reaſon. Now if the Civil Power has placed it in the hands of a *Jury*, to determine whether ſuch a Self-murtherer were Diſtracted or no, and made them the proper Judges; I do not ſee but that as the *State* does, ſo muſt

muſt the *Church* acquieſce in ſuch a Judgment as thoſe legally impowered Men think fit to give. As Judges themſelves give Sentence, not always according to their private perſuaſion or belief, but according to the publick Verdict of the *Jury*. This I ſay the rather, becauſe it is, perhaps, the proper juſtification of the Clergy, when any of theſe Self-murtherers are buried according to Form. They are directed by the publick Judgment, and not by their private Opinion: For, ſhould a Man be accidentally found dead, and the *Jury* ſhould think fit to bring him in guilty of Self-murther, the Miniſter, though he believed the contrary never ſo firmly, muſt not yet bury that Man according to form; becauſe the Law is his Rule of Acting, and not his private Belief. The Law ſays, that Self-murtherers, or thoſe who lay violent hands upon themſelves, ſhall not be buried, in ſuch a manner; but the Law does not ſay, *who* are Self-murtherers, but leaves that, to ſuch and ſuch particular People, the Miniſter of the Law, is therefore, in this point, to know who are Self-murtherers, from *their* Mouth, not from his own, nor yet from the Opinion of the Publick. Now if a Miniſter may not bury the Dead, which are brought in guilty of Self-mur- Dif. XIX.

Diſ. XIX

ther, though he believe verily they died a Natural Death; only becauſe the Law ſays, Self-murtherers ſhall not be ſo buried, how ſhould he be obliged to *refuſe* burying the Dead, which are by Law brought in Diſtracted, although he may well ſuſpect they died by Violence, and with Deliberation, *i. e.* why ſhould not the Law be his Rule, in one caſe, as well as it is, in the other? If the ſcruple be, that the *Rubric* does not determine whether theſe People be Diſtracted, or not, in their Senſes, or out of them: But only whether they laid violent Hands on themſelves or no? The anſwer is, that a *violent* Death is oppos'd to a *natural* one, which is not choſen, but unavoidable; but People may be poyſon'd through Ignorance and Miſtake; and they may fall from a Precipice; and they may ſhoot themſelves accidentally; and the *event* is the ſame, as if they had choſen theſe Deaths, but not the *fault*; and there muſt be ſome, who are to judge, whether they were *Voluntary* or *Caſual*. And it is not to be preſum'd the Church would condemn ſuch as died theſe Deaths, though Violent, yet accidentally, nor deny them the favour of her Chriſtian Offices; ſhe muſt therefore truſt ſome People to judge, whether theſe People died Voluntarily or Caſually, and her private Miniſters

niſters muſt be determin'd by this Judgment; and ſince true Diſtraction, is as innocent and blameleſs, as any other ignorance or miſtake can be, ſhe will no more deny her Chriſtian Offices to one, than to the other. And therefore if a Chriſtian, truly diſtracted, lay violent hands upon himſelf, ſhe may as well hope well of him, as of one who died a violent Death, by Poyſon, falling from a Precipice, or accidental Shot, and conſequently bury him, in form, as ſhe does, I think the other. And in this caſe, ſhe truſts the ſame People with judging and determining, who they are that lay violent Hands upon themſelves, that the Civil Power truſts, and ſhe acts according to *their* Judgment, and not according to the private Judgment of her ſeveral Miniſters, Eccleſiaſtical or Civil. This, I think, will juſtifie the Clergy, from contracting any Irregularity, by burying in form, thoſe who are brought in Diſtracted, as well as it will the Civil Officers, for not ſeizing on the Eſtate and Effects of the Deceaſed, which are forfeited by Law, if they were not Diſtracted; although both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters may be perſuaded that the Parties deceaſed were indeed Self-murtherers; becauſe the Laws do not truſt them to *judge*, but to *execute* according Diſ. XIX.

Diſ. XIX.

to the judgment of other People. You ſee, then, that the whole matter devolves upon the *Jury*; and therefore, if the conſtant mitigation of the Rigors of the Law, againſt Self-murtherers, be any manner of encouragement to fall into that Practice, it will behove the *Jury* to conſider well, whether the favourable Verdict they generally bring in, be always ſo righteous and ſo ſeaſonable, as they imagine: Whether, ſince the wiſdom of the Laws intends, that the Confiſcation of Eſtates, the undoing a Family, the ſhameful Burial ſhe appoints, and the denial of Chriſtian Offices, ſhall deter Men from theſe horrible Attempts, the Mercy that defeats all theſe Intentions ſo conſtantly, be not more likely to continue on, than to repreſs theſe cruel Violences. This is what I ſaid will deſerve to be better conſidered, than it commonly is: For ſuch is the Natural Affection a Man bears to his Wife, and Children, Family and Dependents, ſuch is the reſpect he has to his own Fame, ſuch the kindneſs he bears even to his own dead Body, that, were he ſure, his Eſtate would be forfeited, and his Effects carried from his Family; were he ſure he ſhould be buried in the High-way, and with a Stake driven through him, as a mark of huge Infamy, and ſure he ſhould not be buried

like

like a Chriſtian, with thoſe laſt Offices perhaps he would give way to calmer Councils, and be content to bear his Shame, or Pain, or Loſs, till God ſaw fit to put an end to all his Sufferings, by natural means. And therefore, an Inſtance or two of ſuch ſeverity as is legal, well and wiſely choſen, might prove a greater preſervative againſt theſe Violences, than ſuch a conſtant and expected mercy, as we always find, on theſe occaſions. For Men have now no fear of *Laws*; and when they have laid aſide the fear of God, they go about this buſineſs with great readineſs, they are ſure of favour in *this* World, and they will venture the *other*. Diſ. XIX.

And if it be thought, that the Men who will venture Gods diſpleaſure, will be little mov'd with any leſſer Conſideration of this life, every days experience may convince us of the contrary, and ſhew us, that God is offended much more cheaply, and eaſily, than any Neighbour we have, and that we really value his Anger, and his threatnings leſs, than the leaſt legal Penalties: However, it were good to try, now and then, whether the execution of the Laws made to deter Men from Self-murther, would not have better effect, than the courſes that are generally taken, we ſee, have. And the Examples ſhould

Diſ. XIX.

be made (if one might chooſe) of ſome ſuch as have lived very riotouſly and looſely, and ſpent almoſt all their Subſtance, and ſuch as have juſtified and defended, in their lives, the like practice in other People, maintaining it by Principles. The riotous and looſe Livers, would deſerve this uſage beſt, and they would find the leaſt pity, from the ſerious part of Mankind, and ſuch a Puniſhment might be a check to others, and keep them within bounds, and make them better Huſbands, which is a thing of more conſequence than People imagine, frugality being the Parent of many Virtues, and a reſtraint to many Vices and Enormities. And if they who have been known to juſtifie theſe practices by Principles, whilſt they lived, were ſure to be made Examples, above others; it might help to reſtrain others from taking ſuch liberties in Diſcourſe, and from encouraging, thereby, thoſe who would not, it may be, be ſo forward, without thoſe bad Inſtructors. Such People, will beſt deſerve to be diſgraced, and treated with all rigour, becauſe they do not only do this wickedneſs themſelves, but endeavour to propagate their deſtructive Principles, and ſuch would meet with leaſt Compaſſion, which thing is always to be heeded, in making Examples.

There

There will be room enough for Pity, and a tender Regard, to ſuch whoſe unhappy Conſtitution, Make, and Frame, wrong Education; falſe and miſtaken Principles; with great weakneſs both of Body and Mind; long and continued Pains; and dreadful and amazing Calamities, have driven to theſe Extremities. If Laws and Rules are ever to be broken, it were for ſuch whoſe miſeries entitle them to all the Worlds Pity, and who have liv'd a Regular, a Sober, Virtuous, nay, and a Religious Life. There, one has room to think, theſe violent Deaths might proceed from incurable Melancholy, and true Diſtraction; and not from ſuddain, deſperate, and impious Reſolutions, which are uſually the fruits of a life paſs'd in Luxurious, Vicious, and ungodly Courſes, when at laſt Men find themſelves overtaken with dreadful Poverty, or ſee the Infamy and Ruine, that has long been owing to them, come upon them, with a force that is not to be withſtood, by ſuch as have abus'd their Reaſon, and neglected all Religion. And, indeed, without Religion, both Reaſon and Virtue will be found deficient, under theſe Temptations, if Reaſon and Virtue ever can be found without Religion. Take away the Belief of God, and the Life of the Soul, and of Rewards

Diſ. XIX.

Diſ. XIX. Rewards and Puniſhments in the other World; and the miſeries of Human Life may ſometimes be ſo preſſing, that all the Conſiderations this World can afford, will hardly make it tolerable. But when a Man conſiders himſelf to be a Creature of Gods making, and ſubject to his Laws and Government, by all the reaſon in the World, and to the common diſpenſations of his Providence, and conſequently not at liberty to withdraw himſelf from the ſervice appointed to him; and tied moreover by Command, and, if a Chriſtian, by voluntary undertaking, to ſubmit to the Will of God, in all conditions of Life, to accept the evil with the good, to be thankful for the one, and to improve under the other, by making good uſe of it; when he conſiders this, and that there is alſo a Life to come, where it will be impoſſible to fly from God (though we ſhould do it here) and that the miſeries our diſobedience and impatience here, would entail upon us, are, in no ſort, to be compared with thoſe which we eſcape by Death (which though exceeding ſharp, are yet not capable of being very long) when theſe, and ſuch like Conſiderations, as Religion will ſupply the mind with, come to Mens aſſiſtance, in their ſtraits, they will, with the grace of God, van-

quiſh

quiſh the ſtrongeſt Temptations to theſe Violences. We muſt therefore oppoſe the Will and Command of God, to the deſires of preſent eaſe we have, in our Diſtreſs, and the future miſchiefs of his Diſpleaſure, to the preſent ones we labour under, whether, of Fear, or Pain, or Shame. And we ſhall then ſee, to whether ſide 'tis fitteſt to incline; whether the ſhort afflictions which are, here, as it were, but for a Moment, may be compared with the wrath of God, which abideth for ever. In a word, unleſs the mind be fortified with Arguments of Religion, and Conſiderations of the other Life, our natural fortitude and patience, will yield to many violent Temptations, that beſet Men, in this vale of Miſery. And therefore, few attempts of this bad kind are made, till either Religion is wholly maſtered, and its impreſſions quite effaced, or Men are ſo miſguided, as to think theſe miſchiefs may be done, and Religion (as not concern'd) be ſafe notwithſtanding. But 'tis more conſiſtent with Reaſon, to lay aſide all Religion, and diſ-believe the whole, than allowing the Juſtice of God, and the Life of the World to come, to think theſe Self-murtherers are not to account ſeverely for the violences they have offer'd to themſelves, if they are not indeed, Diſ. XIX.

Diſ. XIX.

indeed, (what they are commonly reputed) quite loſt to reaſon, and diſtracted; of which God will judge much better than we can do.

As for thoſe unhappy People, who lying under the dreadful apprehenſion of Gods Anger, accounting themſelves *Veſſels of Wrath, and fitted for Deſtruction*; and not being able to live under the torment of that thought, put an end to their miſerable lives, as they are moſt to be pittied whilſt alive, ſo there ſeems to be the greateſt reaſon for ſparing them when dead, ſince nothing in the World can look ſo like Diſtraction, as that diſtemperature of Brain, which makes them reaſon and act ſo ſtrangely. For if they are indeed Veſſels of Wrath, is this the way to give them any eaſe? If they believe themſelves conſign'd to Pain and Miſery in the other World, what do they get, by throwing themſelves into that place of Torment, before their time? This is to die, for fear of Death, and indeed, a great deal worſe.

When condemn'd Criminals prevent their legal Puniſhment, by diſpatching themſelves, they think they ſave themſelves the ſhame of dying publickly by infamous Hands; vain imagination that! but what can theſe poor People propoſe to them-

themſelves, by falling into the hands of the living God, a great deal ſooner then (even according to their own fears) they need to do, if they would live as long as God would let them? Can any thing be liker madneſs than this, under ſuch perſuaſion? But ſuch perſuaſion, is, it ſelf, the maddeſt, that a Chriſtian can be fill'd with. Theſe People, are very frequently, very good People, or if they have been Sinners, they have long repented, and amended; 'tis the ſenſe of their guilt that lies ſo heavy on them; they would give all the World to be forgiven; they believe in God, and in Jeſus Chriſt, the Reſurrection, Life Everlaſting, and the World to come: They believe that Chriſt died to ſave Sinners: They do not know *one* Sinner in the World, beſides themſelves, for whom they do not think that Chriſt died, if that Sinner would repent, and believe the Goſpel. Is it not near to madneſs, to believe that Chriſt died for ſuch as Repent, and believe the Goſpel; and yet, to diſtruſt he died for *Me*, who am ſo ſorry for my Sins, that I would give the World (if it were mine) I never had committed them? And would not, for any earthly thing, commit the like again? And would purchaſe the favour of God, with my Blood, and who am quite oppreſs'd

Diſc. XIX.

Diſ. XIX. preſs'd with the dread of his Diſpleaſure? If this be not repenting and believing, no one can ſay what is; and yet this is the caſe of many of theſe unhappy People. Nothing therefore can be liker, or nearer to Deſtraction than ſo to believe, and ſo to repent, as both to ſorrow and amend, and yet conclude themſelves *Veſſels of Wrath*, and under Gods Diſpleaſure; for nothing is ſo contrary to all Senſe, and Reaſon, and the whole tenor of the Goſpel, as to believe that God is not reconciled to all Penitent Believers, in Jeſus Chriſt, and without this, Chriſtianity would fall to the Ground. Theſe People therefore ſhut their Eyes to all the light that can be opened on them, and by making ſuch concluſions as muſt be falſe, if Chriſtianity be true, are not only miſerable, but give ſuch marks of a wrong turn in their Head, that to conclude they are near Diſtraction, is not only charitable, but reaſonable. Theſe things I have been led to ſay, in conſidering the caſe of *Self-murther*, which, from the whole, will appear, not only a huge misfortune, but, alſo, where Men have their Senſe and Reaſon, a great and crying Sin; and which, according to the Goſpel Covenant, excludes our Hope, by cutting off Repentance, upon which 'tis groun-

grounded. If there be any room for Charity, it is, that though all we ſee is wrong, yet we may not ſee all that truly is, in the condition of theſe poor People; but God *does*, and he is infinitely merciful, and, doubtleſs, will conſider, with his uſual Goodneſs, all that can poſſibly deſerve his Pity and Forgiveneſs. And though he is juſt, yet is his Juſtice tempered with ſuch Mercy, that even the moſt provoking Sinner may deſire, with *David*, *rather to fall into the hands of God, than Man.* Diſ. XIX.

FINIS.

10 JY60

Some Books Printed for, and ſold by Charles Harper, *at the* Flower-de-luce *againſt St.* Dunſtan's *Church in* Fleet ſtreet.

AN Eſſay on Miracles 8*vo.* by *W. Fleetwood* M. A. The Second Edition.

A plain Method of Chriſtian Devotion, laid down in Diſcourſes, Meditations, and Prayers; fitted to the various occaſions of a Religious Life. Reviſed and Tranſlated from the *French* of Monſieur *Jurieu*, by *W. Fleetwood*, M. A. 12 *s.* The three and twentieth Edition.

A Sermon Preached *September* 7. 1704. being the day appointed for the Thankſgiving for the late Victory.

A

Some Books Printed for C. Harper.

A Sermon Preached before the Gentlemen Educated at *Eton College*, at St. *Anſtins* Church, *London*, *December* 6th. 1701.

A Sermon Preached before his late Majeſty King *William*, at *Whitehall*, *Tueſday November* 5th. 1700. Publiſhed by his Majeſty's Special Command.

A Sermon Preached *Auguſt* 4th 1700, on occaſion of the Death of the Duke of *Glouceſter*. Theſe four Sermons by *W. Fleetwood*, M. A.

The Reaſonable Communicant: Or, an Explanation of the Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in all its parts, from the Communion Service; in a Diſcourſe between a Miniſter and one of his Pariſhioners *8vo.*

The Life of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, an Heroic Poem, Dedicated to her late Sacred Majeſty Queen *Mary*, Attempted by *Sam. Weſley*, M. A. the *Second Edition*; Reviſed by the Author, and improved; with the Addition of a large Map of the Holy Land, and a Table of the Principal Matters, with 60 Copper Plates, by the Celebrated Hand of *W. Faithorn*, *Fol.*

The Hiſtory of the Old and New Teſtament in Verſe, with 330 Sculptures, in three Volumes, *8vo.* Dedicated to her preſent Sacred Majeſty, *viz.* Vol. 1. From the Creation, to the Revolt of the Ten Tribes. Vol. 2. From thence to the end of the Prophets. Vol. 3. Repreſenting the Actions and Miracles of our Bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles. By *S. Weſley*, Author of the *Life* of *Chriſt*.

The Pious Communicant rightly prepared; or a Diſcourſe concerning the *Bleſſed Sacrament*; with Prayers and Hymns ſuited to the ſeveral Parts of that Holy Office, 12o. Theſe three by *Samuel Weſley*, M. A. Chaplain to his Grace, *John* Duke of *Buckingham*, and Marquiſs of *Normanby*.

The Hiſtorical and Miſcellaneous Tracts of the Reverend and Learned *Peter Heylyn*, D. D. now Collected into one Volume, and an account of the life of the Author, never before publiſhed, *Fol.*

Reſolves Divine, Moral, and Political; with ſeveral new Additions in Proſe and Verſe. The Eleventh Edition. By *Owen Felltham* Eſq; *Fol.*

The whole Duty of Man, according to the Law of Nature, by that famous Civilian, *Samuel Puffendorf*, now made *Engliſh* *8vo.* The third Edition, with ſome Additions; carefully Corrected.